

THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts,
and Public Affairs.*

Volume II

New York, Wednesday, May 20, 1925

Number 2

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RESULTS OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

"CIVILIZATION is so closely interwoven," said Sir Willoughby Dickinson, President of the League of Nations Societies, in a recent address to Philadelphians, "that it is impossible for any great nation to remain neutral, once a general war has been started."

It would seem that this lesson of the war might be set down as axiomatic in the light of our own experience—and with Americans it is only our own experience that counts.

Unconsciously, in the daily exchange of thought, of persons, of services, of credits, of cash or goods, the fine imperceptible tendrils of an international growth had penetrated so closely to the foundations of each national life in 1914, that the dislocation of war, the tearing out of these clinging tendrils, very nearly wrecked the fabric of civilization. Perhaps another month or two of warfare would have completed the ruin irreparably. Quite consciously now, and with fullest intent, we are again fostering that growth and cultivating assiduously the spread of international, interwoven interests, in an effort to restore stability, and to rebuild upon the shaken foundations.

A French statesman, who during the whole war had stood very close to the succession of events, was asked why Marshal Foch had not carried victory through to completion, when apparently he held it in his grasp

—to a complete and decisive defeat in the field of the German forces and peace imposed in Berlin.

"Because," said the Frenchman, "Foch is an idealist—one of these fellows who goes to Mass before he makes a decision. He knew that in a short campaign, a very few weeks, he could destroy the German armies. He did realize also the glory France would win and the honor to himself as commander-in-chief. He realized, I know, that by complete defeat of the Germans subsequent negotiations would be made easier. But he had need of fresh troops to do it with, and of fresh troops there were only Americans—French and British were weary to death."

"And did he not trust Americans?"

"Surely he did; too much, perhaps. He could have done it with your troops, but with heavy losses. He decided that he had no right to sacrifice more life; and politically, he wanted one nation among the opponents of Germany to remain standing, vigorous, unharmed—preferably stronger from the effort of war—a source of strength from which the shaken nations of Europe might draw regeneration and renewed life. I am afraid it was a vision; not practical."

Insensibly, as far as the nation in general understands events; deliberately, as far as our government is concerned; inexorably, by the logic of facts—America has been drawn into the very position that Foch

desired. There are among us those who fear our ever-increasing "entanglement" in European affairs; there are many more who loudly deny that America has done, or is doing, anything for stricken Europe—because we have not joined the League of Nations—and they make that a matter of bitter reproach and national shame. Apparently to these, no other course may be counted as helpful. Both these groups feel, perhaps, more than they reason. Without participation in the League a new growth of international tendrils has spread—fostered and stimulated by a group of patient men in Washington—Hughes, Mellon, Hoover—as well equipped a trio of advisers as any American President has ever had. Quite conscious of the position of governments in the world, they have evoked everywhere the individual effort of the private citizen to the restoration of equilibrium; they have based international confidence where it belongs—upon the personal confidence of the citizen; they have drawn into the situation the average man's common sense as well as his savings. They are reestablishing sanity and personal responsibility.

Each international conference since the armistice, envisaging all that there was to do, has failed apparently; but out of each has resulted some small gain essential to ultimate success. Our people appeared to be opposed to participation in the League of Nations; time will show whether opposition was real or manipulated—whether it was based upon reasoning or emotional suspicion. Congress forbade categorically all official representation by the Executive in conferences of European governments on matters primarily affecting Europe. It was obviously necessary for America to know what was done in these conferences, for there is no matter affecting Europe in general that does not also affect the rest of the world. Americans sat therein as "observers," unofficial reporters of events, to the wonder and displeasure of Europeans, with the impatient displeasure of Americans. Out of the observations of Americans the compromise of the London Conference took shape; the Dawes Plan was formulated by a committee of French, English, Belgian, Italian and American experts. An American presided over the committee, since no European might take the lead in stating truths which all realized, but no European government dared to utter—and because the findings of the committee went (and were meant to go) beyond the instructions given it. The administration of the plan was placed in the hands of an American, and at the same time another American—"unofficial," also—was invited to sit as full member of the Reparations Commission from which the Dawes administration sprang, and into which the commission may sink its powers and fade.

It was not the orderly flow of reparations funds from Germany that worried the new administration, but the effect upon the steady growth of new international tendrils of transfers into foreign cur-

rencies of the vast sums collected in Germany.

With remarkable dexterity, that formidable problem is being solved with a minimum of speculation and exchange disturbance; each step of that administration is followed by increasing confidence and stability. Europeans once more see a possibility of orderly life, of security in comfort; step by step governments endeavor to consolidate the ground won by individual effort—to apply to peace tactics the military lessons after war. With increasing stability, looms at once the further problem of "warehoused" gold. Inevitably, in the shock of war, gold fled to the safest place for it. In great quantities it flowed to the United States. It was a normal and wholly desirable process from every point of view, including (if Foch was right) that of Europe. To the unthinking, the accumulation of so much of the world's gold in one country was a ground for bitter reproach; to the thinker, a source of grave danger unless wisely administered. Had America not been singularly favored in its public men, in recent years, both reproach and fear would have been fully justified.

With the certainty of touch, however, which has marked our diplomacy (and of which in the third administration since the war we may expect to enjoy the fruits) that problem also is working toward solution, for the benefit of America inevitably and properly; but essentially and primarily for the benefit of the world. Stability and confidence have been the aim of our diplomacy. Discussion of protective leagues, international assurance against war, seemed futile in the absence of confidence. The one sure preparation therefore seemed to lie in the reestablishment of investment between nations on a scale even greater than before the war. To this end our Federal Reserve system has been thrown open to the world with all its resources. Concurrently run the reformation of the doctrine of the sacredness of enemy property in belligerent countries—the reduction and stabilization of armaments—and the redistribution of the world's gold in such a way as to permit nations to return to a gold standard with a minimum of exchange speculation in the process. We have been accused by Europe of undue profit in these operations; we have been accused at home of being hoodwinked and duped to the profit of Europe.

Whether this steady progress to restoration of confidence and security in comfort, is to be the tangible foundation (as Sir Willoughby Dickinson hopes) of a protective League of Nations, is a very different matter. The very expansion of this root-growth of international dependence, justifies his statement that it will be impossible for any great nation to remain neutral, once a general war has been started. It is certain that until this growth had been reestablished, no league was possible for us. It is conceivable that, reestablished, America may agree to certain principles of international conduct for its protection.

THE COMMONWEAL

Published weekly and copyrighted 1925, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, 25 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City, N. Y.



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Subscription Rates: Yearly: \$10.00 Single Copies: \$0.20

WEEK BY WEEK

AS was only to be expected, the reactions of public opinion to the election of Field Marshal von Hindenburg as President of Germany, have been very confusing. Undisguised misgivings are expressed in pacifist circles, mixed feelings ranging from mild approval to pessimistic prophecies of disaster are in the general press, and soothing reticence or the bright reassuring bedside manner of a Doctor Munyon in high finance. Our first guess, not wishing to be didactic or prophetic in a matter concerning Europe, would be that as in France men tired of radicalism and of war, label themselves "Royalist" as being the furthest removed from actuality, so too in Germany a sufficient number of people are tired enough of war and of social turmoil to want an iron hand upon the nation's tiller, until men may catch their breath—even if that hand also bears the "Royalist" label.

AS for "reaction" in the sense of an immediate return to the Hohenzollerns, no one should know better than von Hindenburg, who knows them intimately, the improbability of the Kaiser or the Kaiser's sons being called to the throne of Germany. Hindenburg, one might guess, would mean to Germans internal consolidation and strength; the practical use of allied machinery set up deliberately to restore Germany to solvency and to a basis upon which she can in some measure repair the material damage she caused to Europe; the restoration of Germany's position as a nation by a seat in the councils of the League of Nations. To these ends the coöperation of German Royalists was necessary—together with an experience greater than that

of the average new politician thrown up from the depths by the volcano of the war.

POSSIBLY it was less "the women" of Germany who elected Hindenburg—less the sentimental worshippers of a war idol—than the growing number of Germans who, as in France, want peace and a maximum of comfort; who are tired of "revenge" and "glory," despite the ranting of politicians and irreconcilables on both sides of the frontier; who are revolting against war, international and domestic; who are very tired of dying and want to live. That von Hindenburg, coöperating with the Allies in those matters to which Germany is pledged, will resist pressure in matters wherein she is not pledged, is probable. It is also possible that national rehabilitation will take precedence in his policies of dynastic interests. He may be a convinced monarchist, and wholly indifferent to the claims of fugitive monarchs. He might subscribe full assent to Mussolini's open statement on the eve of his revolution—"Royalists have been alienated from our cause because I have said that Fascismo has a Republican tendency. Why are we Republicans? Because, revering the historical position of monarchy in the Italian state, recognizing its value to Italy, we see a monarch who by force of circumstances may not take his proper place in the nation."

AMERICA is blessed with a double perspective, which in part accounts for uncertainty of public opinion in foreign affairs. With a shrewd eye to the main chance in matters of investment, America has a vaguely stirring conscience which never permits her to choose solely those smug policies which will best ensure protection of investments and material content. America is quite capable of destroying the security of her investments abroad in some sudden stir of conscientious emotion. In this matter of Hindenburg's election it is the drowning cries of Russian soldiers in the Mazurian swamps—the colossal slaughter of the battle of Tannenberg—which stirs our memory and makes us uneasy. We are not worried about the great sums of American capital which flowed into Germany (be it noted that the fugitive French franc has also found a resting place there) which Hindenburg's conservatism ought to protect; but by the memory of the ruthlessness and abandon with which he exterminated the Russian armies.

ONE of the great glories of Poland is the first great battle of Tannenberg, against the Prussian Christian Order of Knights occupied in the destruction of Christian Poland in the name of Christianity; that same celibate order which, holding its conquests as "church" property, apostatized formally under the grand mastership of a Hohenzollern, divided its holdings, and settled down to found the East Prussian nobility. In the region of the Mazurian marshes, the Slavs caught

their tormentors as von Hindenburg caught the Slavs, and inflicted a colossal defeat on them and on the swarm of South German, French, Spanish and English knights who had come to make the campaign against the "heathen" in company with the most formidable fighting organization of the day.

GERMANS are perhaps more deeply rooted in the past than any nation in the world except the Chinese. Their ancient history is more actual and present to them than to other Europeans. German-Americans used to celebrate in California the anniversary of the battle of the Teutoburg forest—the first defeat of Roman "regulars" by German tribes. To Germans, Tannenberg, after more centuries than an American could believe have been, was a living battlefield—an unavenged defeat. No doubt the drowning cries of Prussian knights sang in the ears of von Hindenburg—one of their descendants. The local inhabitants admitted, before 1914, that the swamps were haunted. So Joffre may have remembered that other great battle on the Marne, between forces comparable to those of 1914; between the Huns of Attila advancing along the same line as the Germans, and the Allies: Roman legions, Franco-Romans and Goths, entrenched where Joffre stopped. Had there been convenient marsh traps there, it is not improbable that Father Joffre might have forced the Germans into them with the same ruthlessness as that with which von Hindenburg wiped out the Russians—as the Poles, centuries before, wiped out the Prussian knights—as the Romans and Goths broke and massacred the hordes of Attila.

WHEN one thinks of the ruthlessness in European warfare, it is well to remember a bit of European history, and to thank our stars that we are well and safely out of it. With a great fear we should fear drawing in to our domestic concerns, imported racial antagonisms and hatreds. We should be prompt to call the alarm where we see them raise their heads. The danger to us from European entangling alliances, is perhaps not so great as that of European racial enmities imported, or the fostering of hatred by us for any foreign nation.

WERE it not for the commanding importance of the topic, there would be something almost appalling about the spectacle of 140,000 boy orators, raving, reciting and maddening about the land in frenzied competition for cash prizes. The Constitution, however, is so big an interest that it affords solid foundation for any amount of discussion and dedication of endeavor. This high-school study of the great American charter of rights and liberties has, in fact, attracted a surprisingly small amount of general publicity considering its vital possibilities as an educational movement, and the great vogue it attained in its special field. The results disclosed at the final proceeding for the year in

Washington—the award of the prizes and public delivery of the winning essays—created amazement except among those specialists who had followed the movement with interest.

IN the published reports, there is no indication as to the general tone of the essays on the Constitution, filed with the judges; whether any of the Rand School type of propagandists inspired any of the competing papers does not appear. But there can be no doubt that on the whole, the great number of youthful views as to the organic law were loyal and politically sane. The effect of the study which must have preceded the writing of the papers and, no doubt, the wise guidance of teachers and friendly guides, was to turn the young people's minds into safe channels and to inspire them with confidence in order—in equality for all before the law—and in rigid respect for the bargain of rights and opportunity which is the only basis on which modern society can exist. All the papers which were publicly presented as winning efforts, certainly breathed safety and devotion to the ideals which have inspired the progress of the country since the Constitution was first adopted.

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE was hardly too optimistic in suggesting that this course of patriotic learning and display of patriotic feeling may have effects on our future politics in the development of a better class of politicians—schooled in fundamental principles and saturated with safe instincts. He was also right, no doubt, in thinking that the progress of the agitation had a reflex effect upon the older generation which did the voting, regarding the Constitution and its influence upon the lives of the people by preserving to them impartial government and equal economic opportunity; regardless of the doubtful demands of groups and sections. The great defeat of anti-constitutional tendencies, which was the true meaning of his election, was due to many causes. Naturally, they were for the most part psychological, and this being so, a great psychological effort, such as this constitutional study and multifarious utterance constituted, must have had a great and beneficent effect.

WHY is not the method more generally applied? We recognize the vast importance of endearing the Constitution to the hearts of the people by study, by personal identification of their views with its provisions. But are there not other commanding principles of life which might well be grained into the minds of the young, by study and expression of assent? The great moral principles which underly all civilized life—the cultivation of the main principles of religion—the fear of God, and the love of man—are at least as important as the Constitution to rising youth as individuals, and to the community of the near future of which they are to be the members. Why must the

religious, the moral values, of life be rigidly excluded from the schooling of the vast majority of them, while the political factor is emphasized?

THE question of whether we should be in the Hawaiian Islands or not, is not really involved in the present controversy over our facilities for defending them. The political question has died down in recent years before the fact that we hold the islands, and that there is no present likelihood of our giving them up. Whatever may be thought as to the future of the Philippines, it is impossible to imagine that we should cut Hawaii loose to shift for itself—still less that we should turn it over to some other power. The islands are, in fact, our back door and our rear-guard. They are a main defense of our Pacific coast—for it is quite plain that in the eventuality of a war on that side of the world, they would either be a safe base from which we could be attacked, or else a great outpost, which, so long as we held it, would render attack along our western littoral practically impossible.

IN a word, the Hawaiian Islands are now one of our most vital possessions—hardly secondary to the Panama Canal. We must hold them for the sake of continued peace—or, if war should come, for safety. But, if we must hold the islands, there is no wisdom and less economy in fooling with the proposition. The war game just conducted seems to leave no doubt as to the conditions. The islands are vulnerable. More troops, more guns, more ships, more docks, and many minor facilities are needed to provide for a sure defense. They should be provided to the point of superfluity. The cheapest time to provide them is the day of profound peace. As a mere matter of money, it is better to complete the fortification of the islands—to render them impregnable when the work can be done deliberately. Let us recall the not dissimilar case of Helgoland, and imitate the foresight of the Germans, who had at least one thing that lasted them through all the vicissitudes of their death struggle. Let us have an island outpost which no fleet, eager to attack our great western ports, will dare to leave in its rear. There is nothing jingoistic about this. It is mere ordinary caution.

RUM ROW and its Barbary Coast lawlessness becomes daily more and more abhorrent. To be truthful, it is not the smuggling gang who are the more repulsive to civilized ideas. They are, of course, an abomination—reckless law-breakers for mere gain. But the spectacle of the great government of the United States concentrating its powers and its moral purpose on a petty detail of police law enforcement, while great causes are neglected and great abuses ignored in a dozen other directions, is a spectacle to discourage sane and humane people. The aggression on the innocent yachtsmen and other local navigators, of

which the daily papers are now giving many instances, shows that personal rights and protection of the law mean nothing but farce comedy in the atmosphere of super-heated fanaticism which now pervades the whole prohibition issue.

ONE of the "Gloomy Dean's" pronouncements to receive immediate and approving publicity, was his laconic dictum on the subject of science—"Personally, I do not believe that Darwin's theory of evolution presents any formidable problem to the church." The vagueness of the word "church" in this sentence becomes apparent when we recall that Mr. Bryan, the Tennessee legislature, and other persons who claim a grave association with the same "church," have disagreed vehemently with Dr. Inge. An average individual would therefore be compelled to make a personal choice, and weigh the relative authoritativeness of London and Nebraska. For it so happens that this same individual does feel that evolution is a formidable spiritual problem. If the Dean meant to say that no scientific theory can undermine Christian belief, he is right. But we incline to agree with Mr. Bryan that educators do not always present the findings of science to the common citizen in a light calculated to enliven religious faith. How can a young person, whose Sunday school has supplied him with pretty pictures of Adam and Eve, fail to be perplexed by visions of scampering monkeys and automatic nature? What is to keep him from bolting over to science completely and assuming that he is a later model chimpanzee, with a neater body and an improved motor; but destined to climb no higher than the tree-tops? He may not, you see, ever have listened to Dean Inge. Saint Paul's, London, may be less impressive to him than his small-town high school. It is obvious that here, as everywhere, there is need of a church that speaks authoritatively—that takes its religious faith as a fact, and evolution for what it is—merely a theory.

IN this connection it may be of interest to note that the attack which science itself is making on the long-established citadel of evolution, is extending and strengthening. A popular French magazine has published a summary of anti-evolutionary views which lists a great many important names. In Germany, one of the most thoughtful among the new books on cosmology—Lazar von Lipka's summary of modern scientific knowledge—is outspoken in its conviction that the philosopher of nature must return to the point of view held by Goethe—"Our object is to search everywhere for order and design, and so to arrive at a concept of a unified universe." Von Lipka, who is a Breslau educator, testifies to the recent revival of interest in Aristotle. German Catholic scientists, of whom there is now a goodly number, have expressed themselves much in the same manner—excepting that they argue

for a reapplication of Thomistic principles to the study of cosmology. Indeed, the whole dominant movement in European philosophy, while turning aside from Kant, is also modifying its concept of evolution, and considering it not as too large and venturesome a theory, but as an idea which is far too feeble to grasp a world in which Infinite power has everywhere been made manifest.

THE week's news includes an item which passed comparatively unnoticed, but which could suggest an American epic, were we in the habit of searching for such things. Sister M. Augustina, the last of the foundresses of the Poor Franciscans of the Adoration, has died at Lafayette, Indiana. During her last days she could look with content at the institutions which her community has erected since the time—more than half a century ago—that she and her companions begged their way into the West. But the beautiful thing about Sister Augustina and all the other nuns who have their share in pioneer American history, is not success or the changes which they have made on the map of charity. It is rather the supreme confidence they felt that the United States would make possible the good works they came to establish. Suspicion and even slander might bloom around about them, but they smiled on and felt that out of the bounty of this new land would come the alms they pleaded for in a Great Name. Sometimes those early sisters lived in log cabins for seasons at a time. Often they existed on bread and water. Such trials may have depressed their spirits, and broken their frail bodies a little before the appointed hour. But they did not lose faith in America; they waited for the wilderness to bloom; and they accomplished a work of civilization and charity which in the aggregate is a really stupendous performance. When the hour comes to write a true history of American idealism, the chronicler of the national spirit will find nothing to move him more than the story of these women who, undaunted, modest, beautiful and tender as they were, bore with fortitude and inspired courage a great American burden by the light of a great American hope.

THE project for erecting a big centre in up-town New York, where medical specialists will be grouped together under one roof, and can consult together on cases that come to them for diagnosis and relief, is one that meets an urgent need, and which is demanded by the growth in specialization among the faculty. The superstition that the poor man escapes many of the ills of the flesh to which his richer brother falls heir, is old and comforting—but untenable. Workers, especially sedentary workers, have worse health, and the neurosis induced in their case by anxiety is recognized as an additional obstacle to recovery. Nor is the theory that the class whose wages are dignified by the name of "salary" is in a better position to pay for

medical help than many a manual laborer, founded on any better grounds.

THE lot of the worker of the "salaried" class who falls ill with some obscure disease or infection, is hard in the extreme. It is not an unusual experience for such a one to pass from specialist to specialist, high-priced and by reason of their very eminence, hard-pressed for time. The end of his expensive odyssey may be the call upon his already depleted pocket-book for an expensive operation, or advice to change climate or employment which, to one in his position, is mockery. If the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Centre does nothing beyond shortening this dreary pilgrimage in search of health, and reducing the chances of some of its stages being blind-alleys, it will have deserved well of humanity. The warm letter of recommendation addressed to the promoters of the \$10,000,000 drive by His Eminence, Cardinal Hayes, makes it a clear duty for all Catholics who can afford it, to swell the funds being collected for so worthy an object.

OUTLAWRY of war as proposed in the protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, is "in exact accord with Catholic teaching," and "ought to receive the unanimous support of every Catholic," according to an article by Reverend John A. Ryan, D.D., professor of moral theology at the Catholic University, in the Salesianum, the official organ of the priests of the Milwaukee archdiocese. "It is identical," Dr. Ryan writes, "with Pope Benedict's plea for peace on August 1, 1917, that moral force should be substituted for war, and that an international dispute should be settled by the process of compulsory arbitration. The proposal of the protocol is simply that the nations should adjure and reject war as a lawful method of settling disputes, and that they should make some provision to enforce this regulation against any nation which violated it by engaging upon aggressive war. Aggressive war is defined as war made in opposition to the processes of arbitration, or in disregard of the internationally established arbitration tribunal. The use of force by international agreement to punish such violations of the international agreement to outlaw war, would be a just form of defensive warfare. War in self-defense, after all peaceful methods have failed, is the only kind of war which is admitted to be just in Catholic moral theology. This proposal embodies unquestionably the most fundamental, the most far-reaching, the most hopeful, the most ethically correct method for ending war and assuring peace that has ever been brought forward. No Catholic can be indifferent to it on the ground that it is political, any more than he could be indifferent to the threatened enactment of a law to enforce the practice of birth control. We do not, and should not, refrain from giving our support to important moral proposals and movements, merely because they have become the sub-

jects of political discussion, and of political measures in state legislatures or in Congress."

DR. RYAN goes on—"There are many ways along which Catholics can move for the promotion of international peace besides those that have become the subject of partisan political discussion. They can think about peace and acquire a right attitude of mind. One of the main causes of war has always been the lazy assumption that war is inevitable; that wars will recur as long as men are men. Owing to the too easy acceptance of this theory, Catholics, as well as other persons, have readily permitted themselves to conclude that the attempt to render war remote, is hopeless, or at any rate, not worth while. The fundamental need today in most of our people, is a critical examination of this paralyzing assumption. They should ask themselves whether the assumption is really true; or whether, even if it be true, it automatically relieves them of the obligation of seeking to make war remote. After all, that is the practical aspect of the question. Whether war can be entirely abolished for all future time, no one knows; whether the next war can be relegated to an indefinitely distant future, is a question to which an affirmative answer is at least probable. If men and women habitually emphasize the supposed inevitability of war, they will greatly increase the likelihood of war."

THE AMBASSADOR SPEAKS

THIS year's Pilgrim Dinner seems to have called forth the outstanding table-talk of the year. Most of it was contributed by Mr. Houghton, who expressed certain sentiments which his government had sent him out to proclaim. Answering the question which our British friends are most addicted to when they look westward, Mr. Houghton said—

"The full measure of American helpfulness can be obtained only when the American people are convinced that the time for destructive methods and policies has passed, and that the time for peaceful upbuilding has come."

This, with a trumpet-blast for Mellon and Morgan, a reference to the morals of the American tax-payer, and a brisk paragraph on the ancient theme of Anglo-American friendship, sent the audience into such wondering ecstasy that an exclamation of truly mystical confidence was obtained from no less a person than Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.

Naturally, most of us are interested in knowing what geographical area the ambassador identified with "destructive methods." Could it be von Hindenburg's Germany? But Mr. Houghton bluntly declared not long ago that the Central powers are completely disarmed, and that all declarations to the contrary were to be accepted as foolish fictions. That was strong and purposely unguarded speech; it issued from

the lips of our official representative in Germany. It indicates that our government is convinced that Berlin has fulfilled the disarmament clauses in the Versailles treaty, and is not to be considered a potentially militarist nation.

Was the reference to France? No other conclusion is possible. None other would have sent the hosts of the Pilgrim Dinner into such enthusiastic reverie. It would manifestly be improper on the part of any modern statesman to look upon the British navy, or the British armies, in ever so many unenlightened portions of the world, as anything but agencies of "the time of peaceful upbuilding." No—the reference was to the artillery of France, and the swarm of little poilus who fringe the Rhine with blue. These things and these only, the speech inferred, bar the road to European harmony. Upon these, in the name of the American tax-payer, Mr. Houghton has officially frowned.

That is significant because it is a change of front. It means that "Lafayette, we are here," has become an obsolete phrase. Most of the French commentators on public affairs have accepted it just so, and have gritted their teeth a little. But, though we grant much of what can be urged in support of Mr. Houghton's inference, it really seems that the nation should examine fairly into what the French have to say for themselves. Their plaidoyer resolves itself into this—the year 1925 witnesses as hot a struggle for the existence of France as did the year 1916. Now, as then, the Frenchman sees that failure on his part to render Germany innocuous from the military point of view, will mean, sooner or later, the decadence of France to the rank of a small nation. He feels that the treaty of Versailles, unsatisfactory though it was, provided certain weapons which he cannot afford to lay aside. One of these is precisely German disarmament—which Marshal Foch and his aides declare has not progressed to the point desired. Their view, though it may be biased, is that General von Seckt, the German military commander, has built up a military organization which is capable of being developed into a powerful army. They deduce from a thousand details which have come under their observation, that troops can be raised across the Rhine whenever the propitious hour arrives.

In justice to France we ought to bear in mind the fact that her next-door neighbors are not two oceans. If she does not agree with Mr. Houghton on the subject of Germany's military powerlessness, it may possibly be that she knows at least as much about the matter as even a good foreign ambassador. And yet it is very true that American participation in European affairs can no longer be made on the basis of an alliance with any nation; it must be founded honestly on the principle of harmonious coöperation to rebuild what was destroyed, and to heal wounds that were all but mortal. We owe Mr. Houghton a debt of thanks for having said so.

ONTARIO'S NEW BEER LAW

THE war made an end of saloons in Canada, as it did in the regions south of the boundary; but Canada as a whole never became quite dry. Quebec, a province of great caution and conservatism, at once instituted a system of government control, whereby the purchasing public was guaranteed a pure article and enabled to procure it in limited quantities at the recognized dispensaries. This system satisfies the people, and it is claimed has reduced drunkenness to an even lower level than in the dry provinces; whilst it has unquestionably afforded the finances of the province great assistance and substantially lowered the taxes. Further it has brought money into the province through conventions and visitors; and in other ways has promoted the prosperity of what is now by far the most flourishing of the provinces of the Dominion. The example thus set has since been more or less followed by other provinces, but up to recent months Ontario has been the exception.

That province is much affected by Methodism, now striving, with results which are not yet complete, but which will be given in these columns when the appointed date for closure occurs, to form a united church with Presbyterianism, with the avowed object of political domination. Methodism has always been the centre of the dry agitation. A plebiscite in 1919 led to Ontario going "bone-dry," as it was called. Of course that was entirely incorrect, for though importation was forbidden, native wines could still be legally purchased by the case, and some of these champagnes admittedly are of much higher alcoholic content than any beer that ever was brewed. Further, every medical man was allowed fifty prescriptions per month; and again it is not denied that these were openly saleable for \$2.00, and that the regular income thus derived was the reason—freely admitted in private—why many medical men voted "dry" at the last plebiscite. And of course there was the very lucrative and flourishing business of bootlegging. Still, the Ontario Temperance Act nominally ruled, and constant cases of fining and even imprisonment appeared in the papers. At last the government of the province determined to hold a second plebiscite in 1924, and to submit but two questions which were practically these—"Will you continue as you are, or will you adopt government control of the strictest kind?" The dry party admittedly had a great organization; the wet (or moderates, as they described themselves) one of much less fighting weight.

In a mere historical account such as this, no description of the arguments can be attempted, and we pass to the result which was a vote by a very narrow majority for the status quo. But this majority was entirely one of the smallest towns and of the country districts. The cities, notably Toronto, which had always been against prohibition, now declared

themselves of the same mind by very much increased majorities. The "drys" exulted in their victory and urged the government to tighten up the existing act. The government, however, thought the figures significant; and another event showed them the drift in the cities.

The election to the mayoralty of Toronto, much the largest city in the province, occurred not long after the plebiscite. The out-going mayor had admittedly discharged the duties of his position to general satisfaction, and under such circumstances it has always been the custom to reelect. But the out-going mayor was "dry"—and at the last moment a "wet" candidate entered the field, and was elected by a substantial majority—confessedly because he was opposed to prohibition. His election was a protest, though otherwise it could effect nothing. But when Parliament met, the Prime Minister announced his intention to bring in a bill legalizing the open sale of 4.4 percent beer. The "drys" were up in arms at this proposal, and held many public meetings of protest, at one of which they even introduced from the other side of the border, a champion of romance—described as a leading scientist (why, no man knew) who told a terrified audience that almost any person would be intoxicated by a tumbler of the potent 4.4 percent fluid. The government stood to their guns, declaring that they were determined to stop bootlegging, and that they believed that by supplying the public with a fluid which might fairly be described as real beer, though not of excessive strength, they were taking the best road towards the attainment of their ends. Further they tacked on to their bill, several clauses strengthening the other prohibitive enactments, and reducing considerably the number of prescriptions formerly allotted to medical men.

In a few days this measure will come into operation, and the beer in question will be freely purchaseable for home consumption, at hotels and restaurants, but not elsewhere—with careful restrictions as to the class of place where it is to be had, and as to the character of those who are to sell it. It now remains to be seen how this experiment will work, and whether it will reduce bootlegging and the undoubtedly increasing "dope-habit." Of course every intoxicated person will be credited by the "drys" to the government beer iniquity, regardless of the fact that without it the number of such culprits is annually greater than before the war.

Common sense, it may be hoped, will size up the experiment on the data which will be forthcoming. A strong party in Parliament was anxious to have government control at once, but caution suggested that slow progress was the best, and the motion was withdrawn by its supporters. Naturally, the last has not been heard of it, and it is not improbable that it may become a matter of conflict in the next session of the legislative body.

THE CAUSES OF HERRIOT'S FALL

By ERNEST DIMNET

THE conclusion of an article contributed by the present writer to the January Yale Review was as follows:—"M. Herriot is the prisoner of his own party. With words of peace on his lips, this gentle, courteous man is compelled to carry on a religious war which he knows must be disastrous; and with solemn asseverations that he wants order in the house and the strictest financial economy, he is hampered by demagogic promises which cannot be redeemed without alarming the world and impairing the stability of the franc. Such an ambiguous position is a challenge to logic, which many others before M. Herriot have thought could be successful, but which, history shows us, is doomed to failure." The failure has come and, as all probabilities pointed out, it has been brought about by M. Herriot's anti-religious policy, and by the difficulties of a financial position which, at the moment of the government's fall, seemed so alarming as to threaten a catastrophe.

I find that many American readers are anxious to ascertain which of the two elements in the situation—the religious or the financial—was the predominant factor. Not a few Catholics undoubtedly would like to hear that religious organization in France has become strong enough to bring about the fall of an anti-clerical cabinet, in spite of the presence in the Chamber of one of the strongest anti-clerical majorities on record. A few words of explanation can make the recent developments perfectly clear and will be at the same time an answer to the question just mentioned.

M. Herriot fell on account of his financial difficulties, or rather on account of his hope that financial difficulties, like all others, can count on time, which is galantuomo, instead of being made public the moment they appear insurmountable. There is no question that French finance is—in fact, has been ever since the war—in a critical condition, and M. Herriot is not responsible for it any more than any other Frenchman. The real causes are the depletion entailed by the waste of the war, and the failure of Germany to help France to rebuild her devastated region. A debt of three hundred milliards has been the result. In January 1924, M. Poincaré found himself confronted by a slump in the currency which he obviated by the heroic remedy of bodily raising all taxes by 20 percent, which ultimately caused his defeat at the General Election.

M. Herriot's quandary was not very dissimilar. He too had to find money, and to find money immediately; but he squinted in the direction of inflation, and finally printed two billions' worth of notes without informing the country of the fact. Only a few experts

noticed queer things in the usually perspicuous balance sheets of the Banque de France. When M. Herriot fell, he had not quite made up his mind to reveal the whole truth: the Senate only became aware of the situation through an avowal of the Minister of Finance, which made his Prime Minister very angry. The fact is that M. Herriot, in the true politician's spirit, had persuaded himself he could put off the fatal confession till after the municipal election, especially important in France, as senators are elected by delegates from the municipal councils. But although disguised inflation was the real cause of the Senate's adverse vote, it was remarkable that the motion on which the division took place, mentioned not only the state of the national finance, but also "the necessity of concord and interior union." In fact, not only the whole Upper Assembly, but the whole press, and ultimately the whole country, realized that these words were as full of significance as the apparently clearer allusion to finance. Here lies the crux of the situation as well as the answer to the question: Had Catholics any direct share in the defeat of the Herriot government?

During the war, the French bishops showed their patriotism in many ways—one of them was their continuous and solemn recommendation of the various loans made necessary by the prolongation of the war. They went on doing so as long as the union sacrée lasted. Even since M. Herriot took office and obeyed the extremists in his party by reviving the religious feuds, the best writer among the French bishops, Monsignor Julien, of Arras, went out of his way, on the occasion of a loan which purported to be the last, to remind French Catholics that the country is above political quarrels. But it is no less true that Catholics were not inclined to give money to a government which might use it against them. This is not all. The Wall Streets of all countries and the industries of most countries, can hardly be favorable to a Radical-Socialist combine like M. Herriot's majority. The driving force in this majority is obviously the Socialist element; and one of the Socialist leaders, M. Renaudel, left no doubt in the minds of whoever possessed some money, by one day saying tersely that "he and his friends would know how to get at money where it was." Probably this signal had not been necessary to scare away capital now estimated to exceed fifteen billion francs. Both in the religious and in the financial realms, M. Herriot was sowing wind—and yet he was surprised and shocked—nobody ever began so many speeches with sorrowful admissions of being surprised—when a tempest of mistrust showed him the wreckage of his credit. Yet credit had never

been so necessary, for twenty milliards' worth of bonds will be maturing within the next eight months, and can be presented for payment. To sum up, the fall of M. Herriot was the result of a wane of credit—itsself the result of foolish internal discords.

The Prime Minister himself saw it. When he asked M. de Monzie to become Minister of Finance, after the resignation of M. Clementel, he made it public at the same time that M. de Monzie's views concerning the religious questions should be respected and the embassy to the Vatican should be kept up. There could be no clearer admission that the religious and the financial questions were connected in public opinion, and that, unpleasant as the fact was, it had to be acknowledged to be a fact. But it was too late. The Senate realized that a patched-up credit was not the kind of credit at present needed, and said so clearly.

However, the withdrawal of credit by Catholic or conservative money-lenders, was not the only cause of the improvement in the religious outlook. Another determining influence was, no doubt, the realization of Catholic organization as a force to be counted with. The monastic expulsions of 1901 and the following years, preceded by four years the separation of Church and State in 1905. Had the dates been reversed, it is probable that the Combes government would have been as unable as the Herriot administration to enforce its law of persecution. But with the clergy being salaried by the same Combes, how could there have been any effective resistance? On the other hand, with a free clergy organizing the Catholics, how could resistance not be foreseen? Sunday after Sunday, in every province, we have seen Catholic meetings, numbering between 20,000 and 60,000, stating their resolve not to let M. Herriot apply the law against the religious communities. And Sunday after Sunday, the chance of M. Herriot withstanding this flood of protest has become slimmer. For it would have meant the mobilization, not of the police alone, but of the army as well—against a vast category of citizens, and this spells civil war, which no government can envisage coolly. On the whole, even sanguine as he is, M. Herriot must have known that the program forced on him by the Radical-Socialist party was impossible to carry out, and consequently his ministry was doomed.

This, the new Premier, M. Painlevé, seems also to have thoroughly realized, and it is not a little to his credit. M. Painlevé is a great mathematician, which does not make for practicalness; and he is a great Radical, which does not make for wisdom and moderation. But he is an idealist and a perfectly sincere man, and there are times when idealism begets clear vision. Certain it is that M. Painlevé has had the courage to make up his mind to something which can hardly be called by another name than surrender. His first message to the Chambers was an appeal to union, so as to secure a national effort towards security and towards a financial restoration, followed by clear and

distinct promises to the Catholics, not only of Alsace and Lorraine, but of all France. The embassy to the Vatican is to be continued undiminished and undisputed. The papal nuncio was in the diplomatic tribunal as this was being read out—and laicite, as secular preëminence is called, is to mean liberty for all. When one compares the tone of M. Herriot's declaration in June 1924 with M. Painlevé's, and the present attitude of the Radical press with its elation of a few months ago, there can be no doubt that a real triumph has been achieved.

The inference at once seems to be: if this is the case, is it not very much to be wished that Catholics should be content with a fair adjustment and not go on opposing the government under pretense, for instance, that it is still Radical in its composition, or that M. Caillaux belongs to it? Evidently, and every liberal-minded person will be inclined so to think, remembering at the same time that M. Leygues, M. Briand, and M. Poincaré themselves were Radicals and yet respected Catholic freedom and welcomed Catholic support. But, on the other hand, there is a doubt. The burned child fears the fire, and it seems historically certain that Pope Pius X refused to acknowledge the law of 1905 on the Separation because he remembered the shameful way in which the law of 1901 had been distorted from its original import against the religious orders. The present government wants money, and many people will say it is obvious that it would not make this appeal to union if its finances were in an easier condition. The whole question is indeed: how far can we trust the Painlevé government? And here caution ought to be exercised for, as well as against. The answer depends entirely on the view each one of us takes of the present capacity of Catholics not to produce money but to enforce their rights. People who think, like myself, that Catholic organization has shown itself stronger than could have been expected, will be inclined to accept the truce. The others will remain on their guard, and ought not to be blamed, if they do so in a wise and Christian manner.

In Spring

These vibrant woodlands beat against
My heart, insistent things . . .
And all the world is tremulous as though an angel's wings
Touched it to splendor, and passed by;
A thrush is singing, and the sky
Is blue (I think Our Lady's dress
Casts on it that pale loveliness.)

Out of the leafless dogwood trees
A thousand blossoms break
In breathless sweetness. Petals slake
Their thirst for sunshine, opening
With soundless fervor. Branches fling
Dark arms, green garlanded above,
And the earth whispers—"God is love!"

MARY DIXON THAYER.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MEXICO?

IV. MEXICAN CATHOLICS OUTSIDE THE LAW

By FRANCIS McCULLAGH

THE failure of the Mexican government to help the Catholics when La Soledad was attacked, shows that, as a religious body, the Catholics—that is 99 percent of the Mexican population—are literally outside the law. Perez and his small band of one hundred adherents may now create a brawl in any Catholic church, with the following results—the police will come to the assistance of the intruders, prevent them from being expelled, and drive out the congregation; the government will shut the church; in a statement to the press, Señor Calles will angrily declare that he has had quite enough difficulty with Roman Catholic clergymen who insist on taking the law into their own hands, and that the church in question will be converted into a museum.

The actual fate of La Soledad is even worse than this. Don Diego Rivera, a tenth-rate painter, in combination with two other unknown “artists,” Montenegro and Martinez, is going to paint the venerable walls of the church with scenes representing “a graphic history of the industries, embracing the most primitive and coming down to those which exist actually, thanks to modern inventions” so that presumably, we shall have posters showing Mr. Henry Ford’s motor-works. But, after all, the contrast thus afforded between the present and the past may be instructive: on one side the great, calm, unsurpassable paintings of the old Spanish masters whose belief in Christianity gave them strength and vision—on the other side, the decadent futurist nightmares of agnostic nonentities. Of the three painters mentioned I know nothing personally, but from the haste with which, for the sake of a few dollars, they rush in to desecrate this beautiful old church, I conclude that they are not Catholics of the Murillo or the Velasquez type. I said Catholic church above, for these things could not happen in the case of any other church. They could not happen in the case of any Protestant church and there are a number of American Protestant churches.

The result of this failure on the part of the government to discharge the very first duty for which governments exist, is, naturally, a panic among the Catholics all over the country. No Catholic congregation can be sure that its church will not be seized like La Soledad, and every Catholic congregation is accordingly preparing to resist force by force. On March 22, I visited the great basilica of Guadalupe, and found the sanctuary guarded, closely though unostentatiously, by civilian sentries who kept watch day and night—ready to give the alarm if any attempt was made to seize the building.

All the churches in Mexico are now closed and guarded except during divine service. There have been great panics among the Catholics in Huajuáran, in Queretaro, and in other places. In Queretaro there was a panic on March 14, and another on March 16—both due to rumors that the schismatics intended to seize the church of Saint Francis—and crowds gathered inside that building despite the efforts of Father Antonio Lopez, the parish priest, to reassure them and to make them go home. In some instances the crowds maltreated strangers whom they suspected of being schismatics.

It must not be thought that there are schismatics all over the country. There is only a small band of about one hundred men under the command of “Patriarch” Perez; but, protected as they are by the police, they can traverse the country in all directions and do whatever they like.

Some of the provincial governors openly assisted the schismatics. Recently there arrived in the capital, Don Pascual Diaz, Bishop of Tabasco, who has complained at the Ministry of the Interior that Señor Garrido, the governor of Tabasco, has given several Catholic churches to the followers of “Patriarch” Perez. In all cases the Mexican workmen have manfully defended their churches. In the parish of la Cruz, Puebla, the workmen flocked to that church as soon as they heard that it was about to be attacked. A similar alarm occurred in the case of the churches of Analco, La Santisima, and El Alto of the same state. At San Rafael, another church of Puebla, several individuals who attempted to seize that church during the night found it filled with pious but muscular “tanners, bakers, and workmen,” who soon put them to flight. In the churches of La Cruz and Analco, “the numerous workmen who form the Catholic Trades Union offered their services to the parish priest,” and “in view of this energetic attitude on the part of the workmen, the schismatics did not put in an appearance.” Near La Cruz a respectable resident, called Edward San Martin, was mistaken for the “Patriarch,” and was about to be stoned when the parish priest arrived in time to rescue him.

Apart from these attempts on the part of the schismatics to seize churches, the government is closing important religious institutions under one law or another. On March 10, the federal governor of Ciudad Guzman, closed the venerable seminary of Ciudad Guzman, which has turned out priests during the last three centuries—priests who, whatever the shortcomings of some of them, kept the light of Christianity burning in this country. In Guadalajara another seminary was

shut up—and in Atotonilco, Lagos, and other places, schools were closed. In every part of Mexico, as Mrs. Nelson O'Shaughnessy points out, one now comes across noble ruins that once were seminaries of the Spanish period, but which have been unused since the Laws of Reform came into operation in 1857. Those "reformers" blamed the Church for keeping the Indians in ignorance; but after sixty-eight years of "reform," things are worse than they were before—86 percent of the people being now illiterate. And, after all, the Church did great work. It taught the Indians Christianity, and wiped completely out of their minds the baleful superstitions of the Aztecs. It taught them the beautiful Spanish language. These were two great achievements.

It would be difficult to describe with precision the idea of "reform" which floats before the mental vision of a half-civilized Yaqui Indian like Calles. In comparison with some of the "constitutionalists" whom President Wilson placed in control of this country, the Grand Duke Nicholas is wildly radical. They go back to pre-Spanish times. They idealize Aztecs like Guauhtemoc, who, though a brave man, stood for the most abominable system of cannibalism and human sacrifice that ever existed in the world. Governor Filipe Carillo, their representative in Yucatan, wanted to abolish Christianity and marriage and encouraged the study of the Maya language, which, apparently, he would like to substitute for Spanish. General Calles wants to restore the communal system of land-holding, which existed among the Indians before the conquest. This is not progress; it is retrogression.

I intend, however, to deal with the "constitutionalists" in my next and final article. Here I shall only say that the constitution of Queretaro was drawn up by a gang of armed men, in no way representative of the nation at large; and that, among other things, it initiated a system of religious persecution as a permanent institution of the state. There is no true liberty of conscience here. Catholics are not given the same rights as other citizens. There is no true liberty of education. Priests are hampered in the exercise of their ministry. It is the law that they must be Mexican by birth, but, as one-third of the local priests are Spanish, the religious work in many of the parishes has been crippled by the enforcement of this law—which is not enforced, by the way, in the case of the numerous American Protestant clergymen who are working here. Owing to the operation of this law against foreign priests, the number of Masses in San Hipolito, San Diego, Santo Domingo, San Fernando, and other churches in Mexico City has diminished sensibly.

Another law limits arbitrarily the number of priests in any state, with the result that in Tabasco, for example, there are only five priests left—and each of these five has about 20,000 people to look after—a quite impossible charge. No foreign clergymen are

allowed to enter the country, and all visitors who enter are now asked their profession, their religion, and the number of languages which they speak—the object being to keep out Spanish-speaking Catholic priests of every nationality. Mexico is the only country in the world, not even excepting Bolshevist Russia, which officially asks visitors their religion.

Why do Mexican Catholics put up with such persecution? In my next article I shall say something about the general conditions which make this persecution possible: here I shall confine myself to saying that though the Mexican Catholics are numerous, have an abundance of good will, a great love for their country, and a very great love for their holy religion, they were, until March 21, apathetic and disunited. On that date, however, thanks to the Soledad incident, they formed themselves into what they call "the National League for the Defense of Religion." I read carefully the prospectus of this body and found it extremely moderate and absolutely legal from the American point of view. Its program is to unite Catholics in the defense of their interests, by strictly legal means.

Now, we have just seen with what tolerance and benignity the government treated "Patriarch" Perez and his band of burglars, though these miscreants had broken half-a-dozen laws simultaneously by neglecting to register themselves as an association; by violating the regulations laid down in article 130 of the 1917 Constitution for the induction of new ministers in places of worship; by forcibly taking possession of a house which did not belong to them; by committing robbery under arms, and by assaulting Father Silva. Yet the very moment the government heard that the Catholics were openly organizing themselves into an association for the defense of their faith, Calles and Company nearly went off their heads with indignation and alarm. The reader will remember, I hope, Don Gilberto Valenzuela, the Gilbertian Minister of the Interior who, on the occasion of the Soledad coup, swore a mighty oath that he would send to prison all who created disturbances in churches—and then sent soldiers to protect "Patriarch" Perez in the church which he had seized. What did Don Gilberto do when he heard that the Catholics had banded themselves into an association for the prevention of disturbances in churches and the defense of their legal rights? "This association is illegal and seditious," he cried, and he instantly sent a copy of its manifesto to the Public Prosecutor. He might have waited to hear the opinion of that functionary before hazarding an opinion of his own; but he knew well what was coming; and, as a matter of fact, on March 25 news reached me that the Public Prosecutor agrees with Don Gilberto, and that the Ministry of the Interior has, "on orders from President Calles," instructed all state governors to take proceedings against the members of the National League for the Defense of Religion.

As a matter of fact I am inclined to think that the

establishment of "the National League for the Defense of Religion" does constitute a violation of article 130 of the 1917 Constitution; but that article should be expunged from the Constitution, or, better still, the whole 1917 Constitution should be scrapped, for, as I shall show in my next article, it is anti-democratic, tyrannical, unworkable, and quite as bad as the "constitution" of Soviet Russia. Article 130 reads—

The federal authorities shall have power to exercise, in matters of religious worship and outward ecclesiastical forms, such intervention as by law authorized. . . . The state legislatures shall have the exclusive power of determining the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds, according to the needs of each locality. Only a Mexican by birth may be a minister of any religious creed in Mexico. . . . No ministers of religious creeds shall, either in public or private meetings, or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the fundamental laws of the country, the authorities in particular, or the government in general; they shall have no vote, nor be eligible to office, nor shall they be entitled to assemble for political purposes. . . . Before dedicating new temples of worship for public use, permission shall be obtained from the Department of the Interior. . . . Every place of worship shall have a person charged with its care and maintenance, who shall be legally responsible for the faithful performance of the laws on religious observances. . . . The caretaker of each place of public worship, together with ten citizens of the place, shall promptly advise the municipal authorities as to the persons charged with the care of the said place of worship. The outgoing minister shall in every instance give notice of any change, for which purpose he shall be accompanied by the incoming minister and ten other citizens of the place.

Articles 27 and 130 are so carelessly worded that the authorities can interpret them as they like, and they invariably interpret them as giving the Catholics no rights and imposing no obligations on the government. This view was confirmed by the ablest lawyer here, whom I recently consulted on this subject. Article 130 further states—

No periodical publication which, either by reason of its program, its title, or merely by its general tendencies, is of a religious character, shall comment upon any political affairs of the nation, nor publish any information regarding the acts of the authorities of the country, or of private individuals in so far as the latter have to do with public affairs. Every kind of political association whose name shall bear any word or any indication relating to any religious belief is hereby strictly forbidden. . . . No trial by jury shall ever be granted for the infraction of any of the preceding provisions.

In my opinion, the above law justifies Don Gilberto in condemning the National League for the Defense of Religion as an illegal association; but the Catholic leaders stood to their guns, and on the very day the Home Minister's condemnation appeared, they pub-

lished in the press their names and addresses, so that the government might prosecute them at once. What was the result? Despite his ferocious condemnation, despite the Napoleonic instructions of President Calles "to all state governors," and "to all military commanders throughout the republic," the whole bluff of the government collapsed on March 26. Don Gilberto ate his own words, and confessed that, after all, the League was legal, and that no action would be taken against its members.

The moral to be drawn from this is that the only way to get your rights in Mexico is to stand up for them. The more that people yield to a half-savage potentate like Calles, the more he tramples on them. And there has been too much yielding here. For the last ten years there have been continual encroachments by the government on the rights of foreigners; and though the government would have turned tail before a united foreign community which refused the very first concession, it was only made all the hungrier by the concessions which were thrown to it by panic-stricken capitalists, so that now it claims the right to nationalize all the mineral and oil properties owned by foreigners in this country.

Meanwhile, the diplomatists who refuse a single word of guidance to journalists, are very wroth when those journalists are driven, in desperation and by impatient cables from their editors, to apply for information at the Mexican Foreign Office, which, so far as the foreign press is concerned, is politeness and helpfulness personified. And when the information thus obtained comes back to Mexico in foreign newspapers, the sphynx-like foreign representatives indulge in very cutting remarks at the expense of the journalists responsible for it. "Bribed!" they hiss. Of all the journalists who have visited Mexico during the last ten years, I only know one against whom this charge has not been leveled. And that one is not Blasco Ibañez, who is accused of having attacked Carranza after having accepted substantial sums of money from him.

Foreign Catholics are to be blamed for timidity as well as Mexican Catholics; and among those timid foreign Catholics I have found, to my intense surprise, American citizens. I have found them not only here but also in Washington; and I hold them responsible for the curious way in which all mention of the Mexican persecution is excluded from the Catholic newspapers of the United States. These Catholics may be acting under the influence of the State Department, which, like all Foreign Offices, prefers moral suasion to open denunciation; but, in my humble opinion, their diplomatic silence is misconstrued by the man who now occupies the Palacio Nacional in this city—a misconception which may mean more serious trouble for the Catholics of Mexico.

SCHOOLS AND THE COMIC SPIRIT

By NELSON COLLINS

(The author of the following article has had unusual opportunities for studying the school question at close range through his coöperation with the Catholic bishops of Oregon and Michigan, the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, and the authorities of the Episcopal church and Christian Reformed church.—The Editors.)

IHAPPENED out to Oregon and casually laughed there, supposing everybody else was going to laugh with me—for doth not M. Bergson say—"This intelligence, however, must always remain in touch with other intelligences. You would hardly appreciate the comic if you felt yourself isolated from others"? I was told eventually I had offended a new legislature by laughing—possibly had laughed myself out of a university job. That sobered me transiently, almost curbed my laughter; not the possible loss of the job, but knowledge that the laugh could lose the job.

It was all about little children at their studying and whether parents should be sent to jail if their children were sent to private schools or the parochial schools of churches, Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Seventh Day Adventist, what-not, instead of to the public schools. What the whole situation most needed, surely, was a sense of the profoundly comic. What followed sent me from Bergson to Browning—

When I saw that—no more than the first mad speech
Made out the speaker mad and a laughing-stock—
Nay, rendered justice to his reason, laid
Logic to heart, as 'twere submitted them
"Twice two makes four" . . .
While sundry knaves began to peer and pry
In corner and hole, . . .
Then I took truth in, guessed sufficiently
The service for the moment.

All that fall in Oregon I saw people's faces—good decent people's, whom I knew—distorted with excitement as they discussed themselves as their neighbors' keepers in jails, or else the keepers of their neighbors' children in schools. They made themselves such keepers, too, by an election they carried that November. The Federal Court knocked their transient triumph into a cocked hat immediately, but to me the court-curbing is not nearly so arresting a human fact as the existence of people enough to carry an election in a state—any state, no matter how small or how remote—who would work themselves up into the passions I saw that fall in Oregon in the name of the only safe schooling for children. For the idea that parents should go to jail if they didn't prefer public schools to private schools or parochial schools, struck me as ludicrous then—strikes me as ludicrous still; and the passions evinced, not by the prospectively jailable parents but by those who were threatening them

with jail, seemed so out of proportion to anything at issue as to have waxed gross, like those Rabelais depicted. The penalties and the passions, made me laugh, expecting company in my laughter.

I think Meredith's Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit saved my poor addled wits during those mad months. I read it again and again—drenched my own fainting spirit with it when buoyancy drooped a little before the violence of the campaign. I think the tradition and practice of private schools in the United States is inexpressibly precious. I don't think the country can spare private schools. Moreover, I think religion and even creeds in schools aren't half-bad. Those that don't want them needn't have them. I was told in short, and usually pretty shortly, that I was serving the interests of the Church of Rome when I talked any such nonsense. But I still think so. And then, too, I rather like the Church of Rome. Being pretty shaky, I fear, on many Christian dogmas as even Methodists or Baptists or Congregationalists might require them of me, let alone the Catholic Church, I believe enormously in the tradition of Catholic culture, lay and ecclesiastical, throughout the Christian generations. Any such declaration as that from me out there received a blank look, or a blankety-blank look, from non-Catholics and Catholics alike. But on the strength of my off-hand declaration I was invited to speak once each week through the autumn on Catholic literature in the Newman club of the state's university. I have liked to think about Catholic literature, with careful and equal emphasis upon both the adjective and the noun, to see whether the adjective wrecks the noun or colors it; or whether the noun can exist only as the adjective is forgotten. But it was hard to convince anybody that the lectures had not a political instead of a critical and artistic intention—were not propaganda of the new bad kind instead of simple exposition. I remember reading Meredith before I crawled into bed the night I had ventured to interrupt a big meeting held under Ku Klux Klan auspices. I was well-enough known in the town—I am confident I was reasonably liked—I really handle a revolver so aimlessly I'd be ashamed to be seen with one. The speaker I interrupted on a mere question of fact gave me a public testimonial for "being such a perfect gentleman" in my checking of him; yet the moment I stepped into the aisle for that mildest of heckling, the aisle was closed at its entrance and the parallel aisles were patrolled; the audience was in a fever of passion even more than of interest.

The service that moment needed, if it were not to partake of the madness it set itself to combat, was a constant carrying in mind of George Meredith—

Would not the comic view of the discussion illumine it and the disputants like very lightning? There are questions, as well as persons, that only the comic can fitly touch. . . . If you believe that our civilization is founded in common sense (and it is the first condition of sanity to believe it) you will, when contemplating men, discern a spirit overhead; and whenever men wax out of proportion; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice—the spirit overhead will look humanely malign and cast an oblique light on them, followed by volleys of laughter. That is the comic spirit.

A few months later, as the result of my Oregon, almost inadvertent, participations, I found myself quite formally custodian in Michigan of a program to protect schools of half-a-dozen churches, and a group of private schools without any definite church affiliations. Then, intensely, I grew to realize all my Oregon laughter had let me in for. The necessity and the danger of laughing were greater in Michigan even than in Oregon. But, alas, the comic has been pondered there, in that water-isolated, somewhat tight-minded, though delectable state, even less than in Oregon. Paul Bunyan (not to be confused with John Bunyan) is at least a living tradition in Oregon still, while he is lost now in the mists of Michigan's old-time but long-departed exuberant lumbering life.

I told my clients that there was no new winnable strength in the excellent but war-worn arguments of religious freedom and higher school taxes. They must waive their prominence without waiving their importance. I proposed an appeal to candor, and to excellent people of competent mental analysis in the mood of candor. I was after the intelligent vote and an active state of heart and mind in excellent people, who were, so far, careless about rights and perils of these schools. They were to be the bulwark against hugged prejudices and implacable hostilities. The dangers to democracy and not to religion were to be stressed. I distrust uniformities and delight in diversities. I think democracy means that as much as biology does.

The essence of democracy is to be unafraid of diverse ways citizens do the same thing. Democracy detests uniformities. It encourages variations. That is as true of schooling as of anything else. A great many people who would vote yes, in the mood of democracy ill-defined, for a measure to force all children into public schools, would vote no if they were induced to be thoughtful about the right to variations and the right of the citizen to be left alone unless it can be shown that he is doing something demonstrably hurtful to the state—the most democratic of all arguments. These people were the one voting element that might be changed. Otherwise outside of them, on either hand, were the serried ranks of the fighters who had long ago given over self-debate. The clients were all offered, quite baldly, a stripped intellectualist program

to protect their plan of education; a program devoid of all their own accustomed emphases, obsessions, prepossessions and prejudices wherewith they had hitherto met the obsessions, prepossessions and prejudices of other people. The comic spirit grew meditative and concentrated its gaze. Contemplating me as I set this forth, and set myself forth to do it, the comic spirit doubtless smiled at me as well as on me.

There was some inclination at the outset to conceal my sources of revenue and of authority. But that was quite apparently pointless and futile. The right of any little private school to exist that teaches only what the public schools teach, and in the way the public schools teach, was certainly the legal, moral and educational point at issue; but certainly no little private school or group of private schools in Michigan could finance my considerable undertakings. The Catholic Church was my chief underwriter. The others were in proportion to their means. There was no attempt at secrecy about it, and that was an untrammeling at the outset.

It was something of a task for them, my employers, to lie in bed all together without pulling the clothes out at the foot. It was something of a task for me to keep them there. It was another task, and a large one too, for them not to jump out of bed occasionally to hit at me, even though they climbed back in with their companions when that release of spirit had been accomplished. Doubtless the comic spirit contemplated them as they tucked away again. I'm not saying where most of my woes multiplied. They didn't multiply very fast or very far, anyway. A Holland-American of the Christian Reformed church was downright. "I'm not clear that we ought to let any man be our spokesman who subordinates religious education to anything else. The next step would be neutrality as to that. Perhaps that is where you stand now?" I shook my head. "I am relatively indifferent; that is all," I replied. "Jailing citizens for having children in schools that do all the state requires and more, raises my gorge. Stressing that, is both theoretically correct and politically expedient." But—"subordination is too near indifference," I know is what he would have said. There was the comment of a Catholic bishop. "It is hard for a bishop of the Church to sit and listen to you place other threatened citizen and educational rights ahead of the need of religion in schools. You are accurate. But after you are gone, my mind tends to resume its episcopal emphasis, religious education is so dear to us." Then I said I believed absolutely in state supervision of all schools. This time it was the Lutherans who brought a national representative of theirs into the state to join their Michigan men in scrutiny of me.

My Catholic experience was fairly illustrative from the comic standpoint, although my gravest difficulties arose from other than Catholic administrative mentalities. Catholic bishops listened. I spent their money—

rather a good deal of it. Even more importantly, in truth, I had their instant comprehension and intellectual sympathy, unwavering—I say it with thankfulness and thanks—when I put it to some “acid tests,” private and public particularly with regard to state supervision. They could bring themselves to take and hold the position of general citizens. For a long time hardly any other Catholics in Michigan listened at all—save under a sense of episcopal duress. I was a bishops’ man in Catholic eyes—the rather-expensive foible of prelates. An hour with any one of the three bishops was an easement, a pleasure, a heartener. But with almost all other administrative Catholics, clerical and lay, my commission which they could not ignore cut across all their predispositions, highly impatient with any influence in the service of the Church that had not been evolved strictly within itself; and asking—“How much use is all this in the campaign that looms?” What I proposed would be in the year 1924 perhaps the vaguest stirring within the soil of influential opinion shifting to our side; the merest side-issue of helpfulness for any instant precinct manoeuvring; though it would be on the way to transforming, ultimately, practical politics as they touched the school question. My initial difficulties with most of my clients were precisely my difficulties with their most rabid opponents. They acted as though the school matter is a matter primarily of religion. Primarily it isn’t. It is a matter of education and citizen-protection.

The lesser Catholics of course wanted to meet the situation with field-masses and street parades and hurrahs for the Pope. Other parochialists wanted to play a game of authors, quoting this man and that on the need of religion in schools—as though the other side had not another “this man and that” to quote as good as theirs, and as though anybody to be won cared much about the line-up of “authorities,” any more than one really heeds alienists in a murder trial. Of course the demand upon them to step outside themselves is a demand that goes beyond merely habits of Catholics; it asks a recognition of others’ enthusiasms—a detachment from controlling habits and prejudices—almost an ignoring of the present moment in preparation for the far-off greater moment, that is alien to the habits of most of mankind.

Michigan Catholicism is Irish and French and Polish and German derived; it hardly is English at all, and certainly has none of the intellectual Catholicism of *The Tablet* or *The Dublin Review*. Michigan is probably the most difficult Catholic state, ecclesiastical and lay, in the United States. It has more lines of possibilities for factional groupings within Catholicism than other states have. Moreover, its Catholicism is pious and pietistic, each and both, and excellently administrative, both ecclesiastical and political, but hardly intellectual at all. It is manipulative much more than mental. “That is true,” said a bishop to whom I ventured to make the observation. “We are

still a pioneer church in Michigan. We have had to be busy fighting our foes and building edifices—churches and schools and convents. We have not yet had the time or the mood to develop Catholic intellectualism, clerical or lay.” Catholics disliked for a time any altered tone from their accustomed ones, but my occasional lightness of tones found other criticism. There was suspicion of anything that lacked downrightness. A Lutheran friend and client owned to a reasonable liking for me and transient enthusiasm for some of the things I wrote, but avowed he could never escape a chill over my lifts, or slumps, into the ironic. He dreaded any such departure from literalness. Language meant—must mean—“Yea-Nay.” “I disapprove some of your things that momentarily I have enjoyed most. I have not that type of mind. I am not used to it. I believe in straightness of utterance.”

Another Lutheran clergyman said—“Your material is usually excellent, but at times your vocabulary! You speak of ‘stuff,’ for instance—meaning articles, writing. You do it in speech and you do it in print. It does not appeal to me. It would not to Lutherans in general.” “But I am not trying to appeal to Lutherans in general or in particular,” I had to insist. “If I were aiming there I might try to write and even to think differently. You can reach Lutherans better yourselves by your own methods. Surely all you need do is organize them—not alter them. I am trying in your behalf, and in behalf of many others, to reach people who haven’t any interest in you at all, who are prejudiced against you but whose prejudice is not invincible.”

I heard much talk of alienism in populations, as tolerated if not fostered by the Catholic Church. But I found resident in Michigan the Methodist bishop who is charged with all the Scandinavian Methodist churches in the United States. I found Roumanian and German churches fostered by the Baptists. I found that they all, Catholic and Lutheran and Methodist and Baptist and others, were administered in the spirit of sound statesmanship that makes haste slowly.

We went to an election in Michigan on the school question in November of 1924. We won by three times the majority we had dared hope. My detached program had operated in the state for a year and a quarter. I had some cherishable formal votes of thanks sent me. But I knew the state of Michigan fairly well by then. The election was won on no profound principles of citizen-rights or educational diversities or definitions of democracy. Times hadn’t been any too good out there. Even the automobile industry had languished a little. The election went the way it did, as hard as it did, on the old dependable dread of finding school taxes piling up if the parochial schools should be swept away. In a more prosperous year I think none of us would bank on so safe a majority. I think the comic spirit contemplated that undoubted fact and me. I admit it wryly.

IN THE CAUSE OF PEACE

By ALICE LOVAT

DOES it seem strange that a nun who is Mother Superior should be interested in what Germans call welt-politik in the cause of peace? Let those who think so read no further. But to those who see no incongruity in it I should like to say a few words. Peace is so essentially a blessing; should we not all work for it, love it, "pursue it?" It is the Son of God's special invocation for a world distraught: one torn by factions, ravaged by unbelief and tormented by self-love—the last being the most grievous of the many grievous inheritances bequeathed by Adam to his posterity. For is not self-love the cause of all the miseries which afflict the human race? Man in his private capacity, or in his public capacity, as member of nation or corporation aims at his own good and aggrandizement, whether it be at the expense of others or not. The exceptions to this rule are so few that they may be counted by tens whereas the others are to be counted by millions. And the exceptions are called saints.

What was it but self-love on the part of the German nation, its desire of having a full share in the world's prosperity, of its place, in short, in the sun which urged it to embark on the most ghastly conflict that the world has ever witnessed?

What can be done? Can anything be done to tie up this monster, this love of self; call it patriotism or any other name you please, which in the case of nations entails untold anguish and suffering upon hundreds and thousands of peace-loving men and women who are dragged into the maelstrom of war at their country's bidding? The answer to the question is, or was, the establishment of the League of Nations.

Some may say that the answer is unworthy, that it is insufficient to deal with the tremendous importance of the task assigned it. Or, as Mr. Hilaire Belloc has recently stated, the individuals of which the League is composed make it a negligible quantity in the councils of Europe. If I venture to differ from one whose experience and knowledge is much greater than mine it would be not to defend the individuals of which the League is composed but the principle on which it is based. If an institution is to be treated with scorn because some of its members have not risen to the height of the occasion, what court of justice would be safe? The moment of its inception was one fraught with danger to the whole of Europe and beyond its confines. Would it have been possible at such a time to weigh the merits of this individual against those of another; to pick and choose, and deliberate whilst from the Alps to the Ural mountains, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, nations were either engaged in war or preparing for it?

That the League of Nations has got a considerable number of successes to its credit can scarcely be denied by any impartial mind. Neither can it be denied that it has not been equally successful in all cases which have been submitted to its judgment. What may be claimed for the League is that it has given the countries who have used it as a court of arbitration time to reflect. That alone entitles it to a sympathetic hearing. Nations like individuals are rushed by their passions into situations which they afterwards bewail in sackcloth and ashes but from whose consequences they cannot escape. "Count a hundred, Tattycoram," the advice Dickens puts into the mouth of one of his characters when addressing a youthful termagant, in a tale with which we are all familiar is one which great men as well as the young and foolish might study to their profit.

If the optimistic may look upon the institution of the League of Nations as a notable step forward in the cause of peace they cannot deny that it is but a step. The great threat to European peace is the ever-increasing numerical superiority of the German nation over the French. France and her allies have obtained a signal victory over Germany: but is it within the bounds of credibility that the latter will not try conclusions with her enemy again? Possibly not in the immediate future but when her preparations are made for another spring. Only the maxims of the gospel, and those of the most divine and altruistic kind could restrain a people, with an outlook such as theirs, from taking their revenge. Is (we may well ask) the German nation one which would give heed to the evangelical counsel—"If one strike thee on thy right cheek turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat let go also thy cloak unto him"? Should we not therefore welcome any suggestion which would offer a well grounded hope that the world's peace in the future might be secured?

Such a suggestion has been made lately by Mr. W. Trewen Lord, in the January number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*. It is that of the formation of a Latin union to consist of the French, Spanish, Italian, and Belgian nations with the avowed object of opposing Germany's ambition of dominating, or, more correctly-speaking, Teutonizing Europe. A union étroite which counted ninety million souls would give pause even to a military nation such as Germany, with its teeming population. Even if the terms of the Entente did not oblige Great Britain to take the field in defense of a Latin alliance it might confidently trust to her favorable neutrality.

"The inspiration would be Roman, naturally," Mr.

Lord tells us. "Equally naturally, the driving force would be French. Difficulties are made to be overcome; on the threshold we encounter the first, and really the only difficulty: religion. All these Latin countries are religious, and three out of four are officially religious, and all of the same religion—the Catholic.

France is officially anti-religious though in practice quite sincerely devout and obedient to the Holy See. This is in passing an excellent and melancholy illustration of the divorce between the 'will of the people,' that eternal will-o-the-wisp, and the government of the people under Tyrant Demos. It is forty years or more since the war-cry of the advanced parties in France became anti-clerical. Whatever profit there may have been in anti-clericalism must have been exhausted long ago . . . The only point for us outsiders to note is that a Latin union can hardly avoid being a religious as well as a political union. The political lead must needs be taken by France. We have therefore to enquire whether the Holy See is likely to preconize any kind of union except one based on religion. We may easily anticipate the haughty reply: 'France has no need of the support of the Holy See.' Has she not? And are the rulers of France prepared to dislocate the world because a single step is repugnant to them?"

This admirable article, which should be read in its entirety, ends with words which will meet with sympathy from all Catholics in the new world as in the

old world: "Over all hovers the spirit of the Vatican; called upon (and not for the first time) to save civilization; a lofty destiny even for the Holy See." We owe to President Wilson the axiom that the result of the war must be that the world must be made safe for democracy. To some people however who put religion before politics the alteration of the word *for* to *from* would make it more cogent and acceptable. A democracy on the French pattern is hardly one to inspire much enthusiasm on the part of the Catholic world. If democracy may be looked upon as on its trial in France, Portugal, and Soviet Russia, and even in Austria—where every effort is being made to banish religion from the schools—all that could be said is that democracy has come very badly out of the trial.

Much may (and with God's blessing will) turn on the movement now in progress in France to resist attacks on the religious Orders. There are signs of the "Blé qui lève," though not altogether in the sense that René Bazin used that figure of speech in the title of his book. The movement is at present only in the incipient stage, but supported by great men like General de Castelnau it cannot fail to increase and gain in strength. It is incredible that even in bureaucrat-ridden France the immense majority of the nation should submit to be treated as "dumb driven cattle," and that they should not rise up in their thousands to assert, as Mussolini has done in Italy, the fact that theirs is a Catholic country.

THE PAINTER OF A PEACEFUL WORLD

By J. MORTIMER LICHTENAUER

THE French government is ever gracious in matters of art. One was not astonished, therefore, to find four cartoons by Puvis de Chavannes in the recent exhibition of the mural painters at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. It was my good fortune to have assisted at the unrolling and hanging of these newly arrived cartoons for the dome of the Pantheon. The experience was unforgettable. Even on the gallery floor, one saw that here indeed was the great master—and immediately other exhibits, no matter how worthy, suffered in the august presence. But after all, what would you? Each century rarely produces more than one artist of such stature.

There is a story of a tourist, who one day in great agitation, announced to a Florentine pension the discovery of an out-of-the-way, unknown building full of art treasure. It was the Bargello! I take warning: Chavannes, of course, is known to us all. One can, however, visit the Bargello. One can, again and again, and with what pleasure, visit the Elysian Fields that were Puvis de Chavannes's!

It seems almost incredible that Chavannes, whose work we find in perfect accord with modern art, should

have been born as early as 1824, at Lyons. He came of good Burgundian stock. Owing to a long illness, the career of engineer, which his father had planned for him, had to be abandoned. To fully regain his health, the young Chavannes was sent to Italy; and upon his return to France, made up his mind to become a painter. How else could one of his sensibilities decide after encountering, at the impressionable age, the art of Italy? Then following some study in Paris at the atelier of Henri Scheffer, brother of Ary, there was a second trip to Italy and this time a stay of one year. Does it appear strange, having seen as few could see, the calm, cloister quality of Tuscan frescos, he could not bear as a student the heavy atmosphere of a Delacroix or a Couture atelier?

It was not until 1852 that Chavannes, now strong in body and soul, began the great, long, up-hill struggle, which was destined to become one of the most beautiful examples of the invincible force of an idea. At this time he rented the studio in the Place Pigalle. Followed years of hard work and vain knocking at the door of the Paris Salon. In these different modern days, one wonders why so great a spirit bothered with

that sort of success? True, it was through the Salon, to which in 1861 he finally found admittance, that he began his distinguished career as mural painter. In fact several of the Amiens decorations, not painted for any space in particular, were first shown at the Paris Salon, and not until later acquired by the authorities. That accounts in part for the pictorial, rather than mural, quality of those nevertheless handsomely decorative early works—*La Guerre*, *La Paix*, *Le Travail*, and *Le Repos*. However, Puvis came into that more perfect understanding of his splendid art, when in 1865 he painted *Ave Picardia Nutrix*, for the same Musée de Picardie at Amiens. He was now using no models for his painting, which he did straight from cartoons. In so doing it made for much handsomer architectonic values. One must not forget that little masterpiece painted at this time—*Le Sommeil*—so lovely in arrangement, so night-heavy and night-luminous.

It is not possible to touch upon other than those of Puvis de Chavannes's works which help best to bring out the salient qualities of his art. For although Puvis was not young when he arrived, still his career as a mural painter extended over an era of about thirty-five years, and the list of his output is a long one. There were, alas, many disheartening periods of no commissions. Shortly after completing the superb Saint Genevieve murals for the Pantheon, Chavannes refused, in 1879, to decorate the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce, because he was not permitted to choose his own subject. He would allow no such compromise. Even the invincible force of an idea. From Paris, I have made the pilgrimage, as have many others, to study his murals at Amiens, Rouen, Lyon, Poitiers, and Marseilles. In Lille, and elsewhere in France, one finds easel pictures by the master.

Paris, of course, was the centre of his activities. There he worked in his large studio at Neuilly, walking to it daily from his home in the Place Pigalle—a distance of more than five kilometers—a beautiful, health-giving, spirit-freeing walk. How characteristic of this sane artist-philosopher! His work over, in the evening he walked back.

Puvis de Chavannes's art is the expression of a master purist. He, more than any painter since the fifteenth-century Italian, Piero della Francesca, reasoned all impurities out of his art. Like Piero, from whom Puvis unquestionably derived much, a long process of careful elimination brought a wondrous order to his altogether beautiful vision. It is proof positive that, given a great sense of beauty, logic greatly heightens that beauty.

For instance, Chavannes never permitted a figure to enter a composition that was not indispensable to the ensemble—either aesthetically, or as to function or gesture. That, in itself, is profoundly right, and too little practised in these days when one hears so much of pattern in mural painting. Nor did either Piero

or Puvis permit the surfaces which received their silver light to be broken up—whether it was light on head or body, or drapery or object. The draperies rippled their folds toward the shadows, producing a beautiful rhythm. Ever a process of reasoned purification, whether of subject, of composition, of form, of light, or color. That is why his allegories never bore.

Perhaps the Frenchman, in this cleansing of impurities, permitted to be washed away as the Italian never did, certain live, transparent color-spottings of great importance in breaking the monotony of the wall, and giving added beauty and charm to pigeon greys and pinks, and light earthen neutral tones. Apropos of this, is there anything in its particular field of painting more satisfying in color, and in every other respect for that matter, than Piero della Francesca's slightly Flemish Nativity in the National Gallery in London? His great frescos in the church of San Francesco, in Arezzo, have that life and charm of color that one somehow often misses in Puvis's work. Had Puvis de Chavannes carried out his intention of studying the lately rediscovered art of fresco painting—that is, dry powdered color mixed with water and applied to the wet-finish mortar—his color would have been even lovelier. For Chavannes's highly personal color does charmingly decorate the wall. And with what superb Gallic taste! With what eclecticism did he carefully omit any such pitfall as even late afternoon sunlight! He, of all the nineteenth-century mural painters, brought back wall painting into proper relation to its surroundings. So much is that true, that nowadays any artist who treats a wall in flat tones, thereby properly retaining the flatness of the wall, runs the risk of being accused of plagiarizing Puvis. It is a deplorable fact however, that time seems to have yellowed rather than mellowed some of Chavannes's oil-painted murals. Noticeable particularly for its yellowness, is *Le Bois Sacré*, Cher aux Arts et aux Muses, in the Palais des Arts, at Lyons; which originally could not have had much charm of color: personally I like it least of Chavannes's large murals. The temple is clumsy; although one of the great masters of symmetry, these figures he did not group well. Yet what could be more purely Greek than *Vision Antique*—or lovelier than the swaying female figure symbolizing the river Saône—all done at that period for this same Lyons art museum? The Marseille decorations, *Porte de l'Orient*, and *Colonie Grecque*, because of their subjects, are not dull in color. Puvis used deep blue often for the sea, or for draperies; but it never could be the superb ultramarine of fresco. Not is it possible to equal in oil the velvet-like undertones of terra verde in fresco.

As a draughtsman, Puvis de Chavannes greatly excelled. Not in the academic sense—but in draughtsmanship that makes for that formalized, brow-calm beauty that was Puvis. After all, line, and form, and

composition seem more nearly related than color to one of Chavannes's mental energy. The platitudes that the Florentines, intellectually superior to the Venetians, drew better, and colored not so well as their northern contemporaries, holds good here. In his drawing it is as though Chavannes breathed his personages upon the canvas: the types of such glowing beauty—the gestures—are all so entirely the man! When he depicts austerity, one feels his adoration of Giotto; when he drew youth he could give us all the singing beauty that was Greece. Usually his figures are lighted from above, which becomes their sculpturesque forms.

Of all moderns, Chavannes alone has been able to bring back to life much of the loveliness of antique Greek personages. How many others have tried and failed! Puvis succeeded not merely because he was greatly gifted. He did not try to imitate, though he used his choicest recollections. He ever went direct to nature and garnered all his visual adventures for selection and elimination. Then he was ready to formalize the figure. This ability to formalize superbly figures, draperies, and landscapes, had greatly to do with the beauty of the master's work, and is one of its outstanding characteristics. As to Chavannes's landscape, it is lovely because of the study he gave to all nature. How truly felt, how poetic the worlds in which his people lived! Here is a letter in part to

one of his pupils (he wrote as he painted—simply, clearly, beautifully)—

On Monday, August 25, I left for Honfleur, where I remained in a most happily receptive and untroubled state of mind until Friday, September 5. There the head and eye worked constantly . . . Once all these forms, drawn down from nothingness, had become familiar, and their positions indicated, I felt that I must return to Paris to ask of nature her authorization to continue. She seemed to nod assent, and since she is sensible to one communing with her, and aware of the respect one shows her, she repaid me in good measure.

Naturally the author of that letter was happy in painting the Rouen mural, with the theme—*Inter Artes et Naturam*. To me this mural is in every respect delightful: its composition has a fascinating rhythm. If one could but live in this calm, contemplative, and oh, so beautiful land, there with Chavannes's modern, but simply-gowned people, to study nature and art, undisturbed, and so remain young throughout the years! The great Sorbonne affair is less winning, though more monumentally handsome. *Doux Pays*, painted for his life-long friend, Leon Bonnat, has always been a favorite of mine. It is the most purely beautiful of this great purist's work. Yet nothing excels his Saint Genevieve murals in the Pantheon. Here was his greatest opportunity, which he met with all that was best in him.

MRS. MELMOTH—TRAGEDY QUEEN

By THOMAS WALSH

THE CENTENNIAL of Saint Peter's Church in Barclay Street brings back some straggling memories of the days of its founding—140 years ago—memories of an old and distinguished, and now half-forgotten, parishioner who sat in the pews of the first building of Saint Peter's, knelt at its altar and received spiritual consolation in measure to the great sorrows and bitterness of her life.

Mrs. Melmoth took up her residence in the parish during the eventful pastorate of the Dominican, Father William O'Brien, who had done heroic services for the community during the yellow-fever scourge that raged in the little city from 1795 to 1805. Later in life, when Mrs. Melmoth had purchased "a plantation" on the shores of Brooklyn, she might be seen on bright Sunday mornings crossing the East River for Mass, sitting under her little parasol while her Dutch East Indian slaves pulled at the oars of her boat. Let us tell her story.

Charlotte Melmoth (her real name was concealed afterward with much discretion) was born in 1750 of good farmer stock in Surrey, England, and sent as a very young girl to a private school in Huntingdonshire; here after a school-girl flirtation, she was deceived

into a sham marriage with the charming young gallant who eloped with her—an incident the British records describe in this fashion: "At an early age he was entangled in a love affair of which his family disapproved, and the family property was much impaired by litigation." His real name was Samuel Jackson Pratt, (it was later to become famous in letters) he was born at St. Ives in 1749, the son of a brewer who had grown eminent in the county as high-sheriff of Huntingdonshire. The budding Lothario received his schooling at Essex, and was finally ordained for the Anglican ministry, so that in 1771 we find him referred to as "the esteemed and popular preacher, the Reverend Mr. Pratt of Petersborough."

He must have been over twenty-one years of age at the time of his shameful trickery of Charlotte; for in 1773 we find that he gave up the ministry and then made his first appearance with her on the stage of Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, as Mr. and Mrs. Courtney Melmoth—he playing Marc Antony in *All for Love*—"tall and genteel, his deportment easy;" she making her debut as Monimia in *The Orphan*—"beautiful in figure and sweet of voice." He was a failure as he was lacking in force. Taylor in his *Records* says

he had "a kind of airy swing that rendered his acting at times ridiculous." Again at Covent Garden, London, he failed as Hamlet with Charlotte scoring with the critics as the Queen Mother; repeating his failures at Covent Garden during the seasons of 1774 and 1775, he had recourse to recitation, after which their fortunes went from bad to worse until they began to travel about the country fairs, reciting, telling fortunes and peddling anything that would bring them bread. He goes out of our story at this point; but it is well to note here the smugness of his later years. From 1774 he had published articles under the nom-de-plume of Courtney Melmoth—*The Tears of Genius* (1774) winning for him the friendship of Mary Russell Mitford: *Liberal Opinions* (1775), *The Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture* (1777), *Travels of the Heart* (1778), *The Fair Circassian*, a tragedy (1781), and *The Pupil of Pleasure* (1786). In 1776 he became a partner in Godwin's Library at Bath, but soon retired to London. His death occurred at Birmingham, caused by a fall from his horse in 1814. After his denial of a marriage with Charlotte, he took another wife, but lived apart from her also for some twenty years. George Hilliard declares that "his works are now forgotten, though portions of them deserve to be remembered." He composed the epitaph for Garrick's tomb, which Charles Lamb referred to as "a farrago of false thoughts and nonsense."

Charlotte Melmoth's independent career includes appearances at Covent Garden, October 4, 1774, as Roxana, and at Drury Lane, November 25, 1776, as Lady Macbeth. She was never able, it seems, to secure the highest triumphs in London, but in Edinburgh and Dublin she created a furore for some years. In 1782 she was a member of the famous stock company at Cork, considered the finest outside of London.

Some evil pressure of her fortunes seems to have driven Charlotte Melmoth from her friends and home. Bernard in his *Reminiscences* records that "she went out to America, where she purchased a plantation;" a strange name for the little farmland she acquired on the shores of Brooklyn. We can imagine her slowly entering through the Narrows on the sailing ship that brought her, and the quaint little New York in which she was landed. She arrived in February, 1793—a cold and bitter season to face theatrical managers in any land; and it was not until April that she was able to secure an appearance, and then only in some readings in the City Assembly Rooms. Her fortunes were therefore at a low ebb when the manager, Hopkinson, anxious to outwit his rival Henry and put the reigning actress, Mrs. Henry, out of fashion, gave her an opportunity at his John Street Theatre.

The theatre was crowded that night of November 20, 1793; it was brilliant, everybody thought, with its poor lamps and dingy desertion; and the rank and fashion of old New York—such as it was at the end of the eighteenth century—sat in earnest impatience

to welcome on the American stage the famous Mrs. Melmoth.

She appeared as Euphrasia in Murphy's lumpish tragedy, *The Grecian Daughter*; she strode heavily on the boards, in her forty-third year, as the dutiful daughter who nourished her starving Greek father in his exile. Dunlap, (*History of the American Stage*, London, 1833) declares—

She was the best tragic actress New York had ever seen, past her prime, her face still handsome, her figure commanding, but not a little too large. When she invited Dionysius to strike her, and spare her emaciated parent, crying—"Strike here—here's blood enough!" a laugh from the audience nearly destroyed her hopes. Nevertheless she succeeded, and long remained a favorite in the rôle of Euphrasia, from which however she carefully omitted the dangerous line.

This substantial woman bore with her a past full of sorrows and successes. "Her unfortunate bulk adapted her to a very limited range of parts," says Ireland (*Records of the American Stage*). "As Lady Macbeth, Lady Randolph, Alicia, Elvira; Constance, in *King John*; Margaret of Anjou, and other matronly characters, she displayed powers rarely equalled. She was also very effective in comedy, in characters like Mrs. Rackett, Widow Volatile, etc.; and in 1812 she played Mrs. Malaprop in the Olympic Circus." She was instrumental in keeping alive on the American stage the works of Congreve, Rowe and Addison; and journeyed as far as Philadelphia to play her favorite rôle of Euphrasia, as well as Calista in *The Fair Penitent*.

For nineteen years she held the stage as a leading player of heavy rôles and strong character parts; the critics at times ridiculed her for attempting to render girlish romping rôles, like Roxalana in Bickerstaff's farce, *The Sultan*. She was in her sixty-second year when she made her last appearance, for her benefit, on the stage of the Olympic at White Street and Broadway.

Her active days were not all over; she founded a school for youngsters and gave lessons in reading and elocution. "We well recollect," says Ireland, "her little seminary in Washington Street near Albany Basin. Throughout her entire residence in America she sustained an unblemished reputation, and won the respect of all who knew her. Age finally compelled her to leave the stage, and her last years were spent as a teacher of youth." Dunlap informs us that "she prudently saved enough to purchase a small house on Long Island, between Brooklyn and Fort Swift, with land enough to keep some cows, whose milk contributed to supply the New York market. This trade, and a few scholars as boarders at the seminary she kept for some time at the same place, occupied her latter years profitably."

In the *History of the County of Kings, and the City of Brooklyn* (New York, 1884) Henry R. Stires

identifies this plantation, and school, and home of Mrs. Melmoth as lying on Red Hook Lane (leading to Fort Swift), on its easterly side in a retired and beautiful spot, near the line of the present Carroll Street, between Clinton and Henry Streets. She must have settled in Brooklyn in 1812, or 1813. Her household consisted of a Miss Butler, two old Dutch Negro slaves, and a man and a woman helper. Her nearest neighbor was the Suydam family, who for a while supplied her establishment with milk for the *suppán*—a favorite American dish of the time. She resided here some nine or ten years, highly respected by the best people of Brooklyn—the Cuttings, Pierreponts, Jacksons, and Luqueers, who sent their children to board at her house, and took them home only for week-ends. It was a low-gabled farmhouse under heavy trees, through which could be seen the waters of New York Harbor, the scanty lights on Staten Island, and the lazy approach of the sails blowing in from the outer worlds. She had grown stouter with an increase of dignity—which must have made the natural difficulty with which she pronounced the letter “r” rather amusing. She was nevertheless a fine elocutionist, and the future Cardinal McCloskey, a pupil of her school, related that she took such pains to make her pupils enunciate distinctly, that even in his advanced years he often recalled it; and attributed to the training he received under her, much of the distinctness of speech which made it such a pleasure to listen to him, either in the pulpit, or in conversation.

Even before retiring from the stage, Mrs. Melmoth must have accommodated lodgers in her house. Among these was Egbert Benson (1746-1833) author of *The Vindication of the Captors of Major Andre* (1817), and *Memoir on Dutch Names of Places* (1835). His portrait, and that of others painted by the great Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), another of her boarders, long hung in her drawing-room in New York, and also in Brooklyn; although no reference is made to her in the official life of the painter, prepared under the direction of his daughters. This portrait of Benson now hangs in the library of the Long Island Historical Society, and the question arises, whether in paying his tardy bills, Stuart never attempted a portrait of the stout boarding mistress who had once been the toast of Edinburgh, Dublin, Cork and London Town?

Between 1820 and the date of her death, Mrs. Melmoth seems to have moved over to New York. At 107 Washington Street, the curious student of our older city may still gaze upon the dislocated doors and windows of her refined boarding establishment. Syrians and Italians now call the old building a home; although under its ugly fire-escapes it seems hardly a creditable witness of the calm old days when it sheltered Mrs. Melmoth and her superior lodgers.

Just one hundred years ago in 1823, this fine old actress, of a type that seems forever passed away, sheltered her declining years and fading ambitions be-

hind these old brick walls near the old Albany Basin; through this aged door she has passed a hundred times; through these narrow streets she has made her way to purchase things in the little shops, that here and there still light up on wintry evenings; each of these sagging windows has reflected her stout form, her frilled cap moving about among her queer group of early American aristocrats. Here, by the fireside, she has mused over her youthful adventures, and heard again in dreams the applause of Covent Garden, Drury Lane and Smock Alley; here with a bitter smile she has read the American editions of her faithless Courtney's *Sublime and Beautiful of Scripture* (1795), and his translation of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*, (1807).

They carried her weary body to Saint Peter's Church, and when the funeral Mass was over, her cortège filed slowly through the woods around City Hall Square, and through the green trees of the old Bowery. They laid her to rest in old Saint Patrick's Cemetery, where Jersey Street runs into Mulberry; her burial record denies beyond doubt the account of her death in Brooklyn, and settles all the questions of her nationality. “Charlotte Melmoth, age seventy-three years; birthplace, England; place of death, 107 Washington Street; date of death, September 28, 1823.” She was a noble, abused woman, whose high character was sustained throughout a long lifetime—tried by many labors and sorrows. She deserves to be remembered with reverence.

In a Garden

Gather for the tired and old
Hyacinth and marigold;
Strew upon some sinner's feet
Myrtle, rue and bitter-sweet;
Or scatter, where some maid reposes,
Purple lilies and white roses.
But this garden nothing grows
Half so vigorous as those.
Here are only pure and brave
Blossoms for a baby's grave.

On his little mound shall be
Phlox of pale transparency,
Heliotrope, acacia white,
Alyssum, pinks, and shade-of-night.
Larkspur, delicately wet
With dew, and fragrant mignonette
Shall make sweet the starlit grass,
Where his tiny ghost may pass;
And at his feet a gentian wild,
Shy and lovely as a child.

WILLIAM WALSH.

THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Ibsen's Rosmersholm

TRAGEDY seems to follow two distinct paths—one, the paradoxical path of victory—the other the path of failure and annihilation. That is, you see in one man's death a victory over something greater than death; but in another's, you see only death—the defeat of the body being little more than an outward symbol of the catastrophe of the soul. It is this difference, I believe, which enables you to sit through one tragedy, stirred, chastened almost as if by fire, yet uplifted in a true sense; whereas another will leave you sickened and depressed, as if you had inhaled poisonous air.

Take, for example, the difference between these cases. First you see a quarrel between two men; one fighting for his honor, and the other for vengeance. The former is killed. It is tragic, but splendid. There is triumph hidden in such a death. There is nothing sordid to it. Again you see two men fighting for the lust of gold, or the possession of a woman to whom neither has a right. One or the other is killed—it makes no difference which. Here you have sordid tragedy, failure written in death and conquest alike. Even in our stock phrases, we recognize this distinction. One man builds on his failures and mistakes—another is crushed by them. One man "takes his medicine;" another cowers before punishment.

We are witnessing today, I am sure, a re-birth of tragedy on the stage, both in the revival of older plays and in the new creative work of younger writers here and abroad. The anaesthesia succeeding the war is giving way to a more poignant interest in the meaning and seriousness of life—and insofar as the stage reflects our changing moods, tragedy now becomes the natural expression of this newly-awakened spirit. Hence, in a measure, the hold of Eugene O'Neill on the theatre-going public, and the freshened interest in Ibsen revivals. Hence, too, the re-birth of a singing type of tragedy in the work of such men as Hasenclever and Dan Totheroh.

For sordid tragedy—the drama of failure—Ibsen is the model and inspiration. At times, as in *The Wild Duck*, he, too, achieves the quality of song and partial triumph. But for the most part, he drives toward despondency. This is essentially the mood of *Rosmersholm*. Technically, it is an amazingly fine piece of work. It sweeps onward and downward with the irresistible force of an avalanche. The picture of the House of Rosmer—where children have been known to cry and grown men have never been known to laugh—is portentous and sardonic, and as sultry as the hour before a deathly storm. But there is no song of beauty or strength in *Rosmersholm*—no ardent searching, no transfiguration of suffering. It is all tortuous, snarled and ugly. It is Ibsen in full defeat, retreating before the ghosts of his own mind—sensitive, quivering and full of despair.

Rosmersholm is a play built for fine actors—and that new producing group, The Stagers, have given it a cast of rare excellence. The Johannes Rosmer of Warren William; the Ulric Brendel of J. M. Kerrigan; and the Peter Mortensgard of Arthur Hughes are three portraits of great distinction and restrained power. Miss Wycherly's Rebecca West is curiously uneven, yet hard to forget. Beneath the surface contradictions of Rebecca's character, there is a unity, which one feels that Miss Wycherly has understood but not quite con-

veyed. Her quiet intensity at times forsakes her, quite inexplicably, for a sort of frenzied fluttering of gesture and facial expression. Yet so great is the power of her best moments, so haunting the quality of her voice and the exaltation of her eyes, that without fully mastering the part she has dominated most of it. I know of only two actresses in New York who could have done as well by it. Perhaps none could have done better.

The Critic

IF I were able to purchase only one of the numerous season's subscriptions offered by the well known producing groups in New York, that one subscription would go to the Neighborhood Playhouse. This is with all respect to the Theatre Guild and even the Actors' Theatre. I do not mean this as an unqualified approval of everything the Neighborhood produces. It is as much infected as the rest by the "art for art's sake" fallacy. But nowhere else do you find the same sparkling variety—the same exuberant humor—a more original twist in detail of production—or a deeper artistic sincerity. Whatever else it does, the Neighborhood offers you interest and entertainment; and when it launches into comedy, you are certain of an uproariously good time.

These remarks are directly stimulated by the current revival of *The Critic*—that masterly burlesque which was the last of Sheridan's works. Not so well known, perhaps, as *The School for Scandal*, or as his first piece, *The Rivals*, it still holds a place all its own in stage literature; and the character of Mr. Puff—the prototype of all press-agents and booming Babbitts—is the best of meat for any hungry and distinguished actor.

Ian Maclaren is the interpreter of Puffery in the Neighborhood production; and I for one wish to make a respectful bow to the man and the actor who, within a few weeks, can step from the neurotic hero of Joyce's *Exiles* into the person of Mr. Puff—and do it with dextrous ease and success. Mr. Maclaren's Puff is a sheer delight. What if this Puff does have a certain grace and lordliness? The delectable Mr. Woolcott of the New York Sun may find this less productive of "overtones" than a Puff who is "a gently pathetic figure, eager, wistful, naïve, childlike—at once comical and forlorn." But I imagine that Mr. Maclaren is taking the actor's traditional privilege and slyly modernizing his Puff—restating him in terms intelligible to an audience that lives in the day when press-agents have been transmuted into "publicity counsellors," and contemporary Puffs hobnob with everyone, from super Boy Scouts to university presidents in the cause of mighty endowments. Their pathos is no less for being pompous, and their eagerness no less wistful for being fabulously recompensed.

The rest of the cast is easily on a par with Mr. Maclaren in making *The Critic* an unforgettable evening of merriment. Dorothy Sands, in particular, gives a superb exhibition of versatility; first as the elaborate Mrs. Dangle, and then as the inimitable companion to Tilburina. Her ability to point up the comedy of pantomime is nothing short of masterly. Adele Klaer's Tilburina is also a noteworthy performance. Once more, the Neighborhood has scored a complete success.

Aloma of the South Seas

CURIOSLY enough, natives of the South Seas, when talking with each other, seem to use pidgin English. At least this is their habit in the rather flimsy comedy of the tropics, now playing at the Lyric Theatre. During the course of the evening I gathered the impression that the old hokum bucket had been scraped to the wood, in order to crowd into this story a little bit of everything that has gone into the long series of plays dealing with the white man in the tropics. It has something of *The Witch Doctor*, something of *White Cargo*, a great deal of *The Bird of Paradise*, and a great deal that is less good than anything to be found in the above plays. Apparently this type of play has now been reduced to a very inelastic formula. In sitting through *Aloma*, it seemed utterly incredible at times that the author was not writing an intentional burlesque. The short-hand English of the natives, in talking with each other, is only one typical example of the unreality of treatment which makes this play quite negligible as a serious, or even interesting or entertaining piece of work.

Fordham's Mimes and Mummers

UNDERSTANDING that the Fordham dramatic society of the above name is endeavoring to train men for the future work of directing small theatre productions, I recently made a pilgrimage to see their production of *The Bishop of Ghent*, a drama of the crusades. Without making unfair comparisons with the professional stage, this much is certain, that in sincerity and dignity of performance, in interesting groupings and stage settings, and even in the difficult field of comedy, this group is preparing a work which will be of great future value. All interested in local theatrical efforts would do well to follow regularly the constructive work of this organization.

When Choosing Your Plays

Aloma of the South Seas—Reviewed above.

Cæsar and Cleopatra—A splendid production scenically, but unevenly acted.

Desire Under the Elms—Eugene O'Neill at his most morbid repast.

Is Zat So?—The triumph of two characters and a very human theme over a poor plot. A splendid comedy.

Old English—A portrait, superbly acted by George Arliss.

Pigs—Rural comedy scoured with Sapolio for cleanliness.

Rosmersholm—Reviewed above.

The Critic—Reviewed above.

The Fall Guy—A good human comedy of the slumming type.

The Guardsman—A play in which the artistic temperament and infidelity are selected as comic themes.

The Mikado—Excellent revival.

The Show-Off—A sterling comedy that touches a guilty chord in many who laugh at it uproariously.

The Student Prince—One of the best of the musical plays.

The Wild Duck—Ibsen's self-revealing drama superbly directed and acted.

The Witch Doctor (Cape Smoke)—Strong African melodrama.

They Knew What They Wanted—A play with a tragic beginning and a fine ending.

What Price Glory—A very fine, though not a great play.

White Cargo—A morbid story of the white man's degeneration in the tropics. Mostly unrelieved gloom.

Wild Birds—Exceptionally interesting.

BOOKS

THE GUILT OF MR. BULLETT

The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton, by Gerald Bullett. New York: Henry Holt and Company. \$2.25.

THIS is the American edition of a monograph which attracted considerable attention in England somewhat more than a year ago. Its author was then still near enough to his undergraduate days to be referred to in reviews as "a Cambridge honor man in literature." One grasps, of course, that such a reference need not carry over there the imputation of excessive youthfulness which it would carry here. Still, youthfulness in some considerable degree must be indicated. The fact explains much in the book; but it incidentally renders a little remarkable the intimacy and equality which Mr. Bullett implies therein between himself and his great subject.

His attitude throughout, from the first page on which he lays it down that "it is certainly time that he [Mr. Chesterton] was put in his place," up to and including the final paragraph of the book, is a wonder-provoking blend of camaraderie and assurance; and as to the peroration itself, there is a kind of apocalyptic patronage about it that should at least refresh Mr. Chesterton with a new experience. Whatever might come to mind upon reading it, the idea would be reasonably remote that one of the two men involved has been famous for a quarter of a century—whereas the other is still too young to be famous at all. It suggests rather the salute-in-the-grand-manner which one of two illustrious adversaries might flash to the other in some mellow moment of condescension at the close of a lifetime of hostility shared with even honors in the great intellectual arenas of the world.

But even to marvel thus is not the most curious experience which awaits the reader of *The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton*. He will find in its pages the most impudent, and in some ways the most amusing, "lift" in all contemporary criticism. Mr. Bullett's purpose is, as he says, two-fold: to admire Mr. Chesterton and to disagree with him. The disagreement, which we shall examine further on, can be sufficiently indicated here by the statement that the challenger's philosophy seems to include agnosticism (with overtones of rationalism or immanentism, as the mood takes him) Cartesian subjectivism, determinism, divorce-law extension, eugenics (tentatively, it is true) and aestheticism. The admiration is what concerns us at the moment. Mr. Bullett proves his admiration by adopting Mr. Chesterton's style. It is not merely an ordinary adaptation, in which the manner of Heretics, and Orthodoxy, and Man-alive, reappears as one element in a novel organic whole expressing Mr. Bullett's separate literary personality. Mr. Bullett's separate literary personality, whatever it may be, remains strictly in abeyance. What he has perpetrated here is as nearly an out-and-out steal as such a thing can be. He has lifted, with a completeness hitherto employed only by the parodist, the authority of phrase, the homely, telling geniality, the discursiveness, the puns, the poetic lifts of thought—the vocabulary, even—of torn rainbows and bleeding purple—the whole rich, and romantic, and unique, and endearing medium evolved for purposes of self-expression by a rich, and romantic, and unique, and endearing individuality. I do not say that the Chestertonian manner is not several sizes too large for what Mr. Bullett has to put into it, or that it is manipulated with undeviating skill. Neither, alas, would be true. Sometimes, as we shall note, it starts out and fails to arrive; sometimes it ignominiously

collapses; sometimes its natural decisiveness becomes, in unconscious parody, mere bluster. But for long passages the book remains a very creditable exercise in imitation. It passes judgment on Mr. Chesterton in accents so often like his own that the reader at last feels somewhat as if he had stepped into a not at all unpleasant nightmare.

The spirit necessary to Mr. Bullett's peculiar performance, no less than its mere apish cleverness, is a property of immaturity. To convince ourselves of this it is only necessary to recall how deeply the style of Orthodoxy, for example, is impregnated with the tenets of orthodoxy. No honest agnostico-determinist, who had explored the implications of his own system and was soberly aware of its limits, would be capable of attempting to express it in a vernacular overflowing with the very affirmations, the very mystical confidence, the very religion-born ardor, which he was opposing. If (with small blame to himself) he admired such a vernacular, he would admire wistfully, from the outside—like Matthew Arnold. The naïve effrontery which permits a writer to take it over bodily without feeling the need of relinquishing anything of his own position, belongs to the time when the intellectual scruples are still in embryo, and the writer still feels that he may have anything in the world that attracts him. Mr. Bullett's book is stuffed with sentences like the following—sentences whose source and implications are equally unmistakable—

"His gargantuan appetite for life has found expression in a literary exuberance that blazes like a beacon in the twilight of our time. . . . It is at once the genial gaiety of the reveler and the terrible gaiety of one who rides gladly to battle. . . . To his intellectual foes life may be a sordid tale signifying only the triumph of the worm; to him it is a battle infinitely beautiful, a pageant infinitely perilous. . . . He has raised and held high the banner of life, and spat upon the black flag of respectability and death."

Yet at the same time, Mr. Bullett is proclaiming his own belief that human beings are "grossly flattered by the conception of sin," being, as they are, "infinitesimal creatures scrambling like ants over the face of this minor planet;" that the human will is conditioned by blind material necessity; that the conception of morality is invalid and the meaning of life unknowable. That is, he is attacking, in essence, all those things with which, in the sentences above, he made such impressive play—the source of the "gargantuan appetite for life;" the illumination which shows up "the twilight of our times;" the objective of the battle to which the fighter "rides gladly;" the vision which makes life "a pageant infinitely perilous;" the motive which prompts the raising on high of "the banner of life." Not all the apparent generosity of the passages quoted (the less generous ones remain unquoted because they are also less effective) can keep us from seeing the irresponsibility behind them. Mr. Bullett has enriched his pages with splendors which he has no idea of paying for; he has blithely misappropriated a whole literary intention; and he is not even aware of it.

This is rather a portentous introduction, I admit; and I am willing to admit, too, that if we were dealing with Mr. Bullett alone, most of it would go unsaid. But there are, besides Mr. Bullett, Mr. Bullett's commentators, English and American—especially those commentators who make no secret of their pleasure at the prospect of anyone's "putting Mr. Chesterton in his place." These gentlemen have hailed Mr. Bullett as a thrice-potent critic; and not one of the lot has omitted to praise him for the brilliant effectiveness of his style. Yet one can

be mortally sure that they would not be caught dead, as the treasurable phrase goes, praising Mr. Chesterton for the brilliant effectiveness of *his*. This makes it worth while to pause on a matter which would ordinarily merit only a not necessarily hostile smile. It makes it worth while to point out the chief fact about Mr. Bullett's style with some explicitness.

Of the two headings under which the contents of *The Innocence of G. K. Chesterton* range themselves—literary criticism and philosophical criticism—the first is well accounted for. It presents no startling original view-point, and one might be tempted to disagree with Mr. Bullett's comparative ratings of the novels, or to say that he is temperamentally unable to understand the mystical poems. But his judgments in general display the mingling of enthusiasm and level-headedness which makes for satisfying criticism. He shows cause for having been made "honor man in literature."

There is no record, however, of his having been made "honor man in philosophy;" and if we pause again, to analyze that probably just omission on the part of the Cambridge University authorities, it is not with the mere wish to bait a presumptuous and incompetent thinker. It is because the published approval of Mr. Bullett's philosophical obiter dicta shows, by its tone and volume, that he speaks for a significant section of advanced liberal thought. An analysis of his position should put us in possession of the religion of an important group of people.

We are perhaps prepared to find Mr. Bullett an amateur in the realm of the absolute, with little natural capacity for investigating ideas or focussing them in their general relations. The innocent libertinism of mind, already noticed, which prompts him to reach out for any notion he happens to want at the moment, without bothering to ask how it consorts with the intellectual responsibilities he has already undertaken, has made us ready for a lack of strict and painful thinking. But no fore-warning could prepare us for the puerility of his actual performance. For one thing, the corrective which comes from self-criticism is lacking; there is a magisterial positiveness about Mr. Bullett that renders him singularly undiffident toward his own achievements. For another, that filched style at last turns and avenges itself. In the limited special department of literary taste where he moved with competence and clearness, the informality, the "undress," of the Chestertonian medium was genuinely effective; just as on a much greater scale—it is always effective in its originator, whose acute awareness of his own purpose and high and continuous sense of organization enable him to carry it off. But in this treacherous field of category and concept, the style reacts back upon Mr. Bullett's naturally confused thought to its further confusion. It finds out and enhances his weaknesses. Each attempt to imitate Mr. Chesterton's rapid, picturesque effectiveness with some slashing smartness of his own, leaves him too breathless to scrutinize the utterance when he has achieved it; and often it is away from the point—and at least once it says the precise opposite of what he supposes. The attempts to imitate Mr. Chesterton's discursiveness are yet more disastrous. For Mr. Bullett does not share in any degree that massive inner orderliness which no genial surface madness can disarrange. *He* cannot drive a paragraph or a chapter or a book to its conclusion—as can his great model. Discursiveness merely excuses and increases his tendency to be slack and diffuse; resulting in such tokens of inner disorganization as uncertain transitions—lost and wandering ends of thought—long pages in which topic melts into topic, with no hint of the kindly dividing paragraph—and divagations which still wait to be disciplined into line with the main idea.

The epical quality of his assurance may be gathered from the outline of the heads of discourse in the crucial chapter. Defender of the Faith. The chapter contains seventy-two pages. In this space the young philosopher takes on and disposes of the doctrines of the existence of God, original sin, free will, the transcendental meaning of life, miracles; together with the credibility of external phenomena in general, the conflict between monism and pluralism, the conflict between aestheticism and moralism, the possibility of proving the Apostles' Creed, and the question of whether a system of thought, not professedly rationalistic, can legitimately demand rational definitions. He covers the usual subjectivist ground—the unprovableness of the objective universe; the practical necessity of admitting every-day facts; the lack of practical necessity for affirming the existence of the Creator. Life is admittedly mysterious; but to meet the mystery by the word God is no more reasonable than to meet it "by murmuring 'Abracadabra!' and sticking straws in your hair." There are those who meet the mystery not by the "word" God, but by the hypothesis God—the idea God—the concept God; and they would probably feel that if Mr. Bullett is really unable to see the difference between that and murmuring "Abracadabra," he cannot better occupy himself than by sticking straws in his own head. Of such thinkers he seems actually never to have heard—though natural theology, with its complex and many-categorized "necessities," to use his own word, is not exactly a minor branch of human thought.

He produces an extraordinary addition to the common subjectivist ratiocination when he follows his assertion that external facts can never attain a reputable certainty to the reason, by observing that it is not probable that all five senses can be deceiving us. To reject first a category of evidence, and then immediately recall it, is a new form of acrobatics, I believe—even among those curious thinkers whose one professed certainty is that, since they think, they therefore must be. Mr. Bullett's close application to Mr. Chesterton's pages has left him unaware, strange as it may seem, of so much as the existence of a theory which discriminates between a rational respect for reason and a rationalistic enslavement to it. He constantly confuses the two. He deals with the Creed sometimes by roundly calling it symbolism, which Mr. Chesterton is to blame for translating into history, and sometimes by doubtfully calling it unprovable matter—which, presumably therefore, may be literally true. He deals with miracles by denying them. Sin, as sin, he confidently proclaims to have been an ancient tribal invention; "the most dastardly crime" is, in fact, "in the same category as a mistake in arithmetic." Yet his denial of sin is couched in words which themselves imply a moral standard—"Sin is only a fancy name for the pursuit of happiness under wrong conditions." Later, after taking the part of the aesthete against the moralist, he concludes by asserting the solemn obligation of the artist to deliver his view of life sincerely—"Infidelity to that vision is the unpardonable sin." Later still comes the strange comment—"At the word 'marriage' we turn up the eyes with unction, for it is infinitely easier to be married than to be moral." Original sin is dismissed, with the remark that, if it comes to explanations, the Immanentist explanation is as good as the Christian—an opinion which the present reviewer leaves to be commented upon by those who find the doctrine that "all men are separated parts of God" intelligible. The universal certainty that life has meaning, is dismissed as a falsehood of the story-telling brain. And free will is dismissed with

a series of statements which would need a whole book, to say nothing of an adequate commentator, to do them justice.

Besides the venerable charge that free will would be inconsistent with Divine omniscience, and the modern "psychological laboratory" charge that free will would be motiveless, there are gems like these—The acceptance of determinism will not paralyze the will; "on the contrary, determinism is the very machinery by which . . . wills are directed into particular courses." To anyone who had made this allegation the precise ground of his aversion to determinism, the reply would hardly be soothing. Again—determinism, though a true, and by implication a hopeful, doctrine, must not be thought about. "Once it is understood, the best thing to do is to forget it." Mr. Bullett does not stop to explain why, this being the case, and life being what it is, we should bother in the first place to "understand" it. Finally there comes an observation which sounds so remarkable when restated that I am willing to believe I have misunderstood it. It *seems* to say that a deterministic Christian (a Calvinist, I suppose) is deprived of interest in life by his belief in the predetermination of a personal Creator, whereas a deterministic agnostic is not deprived of that interest by his belief in the predetermination of mechanical circumstance.

It is relevant also to quote the conclusion of a later chapter. Having finished his work—the denial of that significance in the moral life which men have expressed by defining virtue as supernaturally superior to sin; the denial of that significance in man which men have expressed by claiming free will; the denial of that significance in fundamental human relations which men have expressed by insisting that marriage is a sacrament; the denial of that partly knowable and expressible significance in the Ultimate Cause, which men have expressed by religion; the denial of an absolute meaning in any individual existence; the denial, in short, of the whole system on which millions, and Mr. Bullett's selected antagonist among them, have staked their all—Mr. Bullett pauses. It occurs, if not to his mind, at least to that watchful literary instinct of his, that he is really giving up a good deal. Luckily, time yet remains to make it right. Accordingly, he winds up the section by a rhetorical trick which would have broken the heart of the broad-minded Duke, in *Magic with envy*. In a last gesture of confounding and calm and magnificent impudence, he reaches over and takes back from Mr. Chesterton all those values which he has observed to be escaping. He does not precisely say that he believes; no agnostic can tax him with betraying the fellowship by the generous folly of supporting anything. Still, he does not say he disbelieves—no poet, no Christian, can accuse him of hardness of imagination. He combines the two attitudes, retaining, as we say, the best features of each.

So much for legal protection. It is true, the conception of life as a "cosmic poem" is a considerable advance upon the earlier conception of life as a mere unsearchable "bundle of contradictions;" still, the passage has been rendered inactionable. That "no doubt" has done it. He cannot really be touched by the agnostic secular arm after that. So he continues—"Yet sometimes . . . I, for one, revel in the sublime conceit that even we, with our poetry and our pedantry, our limited vision and our infinite hungers, are symbols profoundly significant: phrases in a sentence that has meaning, or letters in the word that is the secret of life. And it is this conceit, or something like it, that Mr. Chesterton holds as his dearest conviction.

MARY BARBARA KOLARS.

BRIEFER MENTION

Fray Luis de Leon, por A. Lugan. New York: Instituto de las Españas, \$1.00.

IN an interesting study on the Castillian poet, Fray Luis de Leon, the Abbé A. Lugan presents a charming picture of the Laureate of Salamanca, following the latest findings of the Spanish critics upon what has become one of the thorny ways of the classic literature of their country. Between the eulogies and the monastic sensitiveness of the Augustinian scholar, Padre Blanco, and his followers, and the drastic fulminations of the Dominican champion, Padre Getino, the Abbé Lugan steers a safe course in avoiding controversial excesses. He yields, however, to the pressure that declares the Hebrew descent of Fray Luis de Leon, and, in spite of the Augustinian protests, he states that the story relating how Fray Luis on his return to Salamanca after some four years in the Secret Prisons of The Holy Office, opened his first lecture with the words—"decíamos ayer"—(as we were saying yesterday) is merely a legend. There is a strange and unnecessary reticence practised by Abbé Lugan which should not go unnoted here. It is the proper statement of the charges brought against Fray Luis de Leon for making—without permission—his Castillian version of The Song of Songs for Sister Isabel de Osorio of the Convent of the Holy Spirit. Such omissions can only give rise to misconceptions which our best historians, following the precepts of Pope Leo XIII, should be careful to avoid. Not to linger longer on these grievous omissions, it may be said at once that the work of Abbé Lugan has been accomplished with the clarity and charm of a master in letters.

Pontifex Maximus, by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$.75.

THIS fantastic story of an imaginary Pope, who in the confinement of the Vatican, sighs for the old days of his boyish freedom on the Bay of Naples, is handled gracefully by Mrs. Andrews. The subject is an obvious one, following the reign of such Popes as Piux X, who sighed for his dear lagoons of Venice, and of the present Pontiff, whose heart feels the nostalgia for his mountains of the north. This is the whole basis of a pretty, impossible, little story—highly improbable to Catholics who have a fuller understanding of the heart of the Vicar of Christ; but not so lacking in plausibility to the gossips—mostly the Protestant set in the Eternal City—who have been whispering of various incidents where Cousin John and Aunt Matilda have had visions of real Pontiffs in closed carriages dodging through the country more or less in the good old Jesuit style of Eugene Sue.

Five Centuries' Record of the English Bridgettines of Syon Abbey—1420-1920. England.

THIS book is of interest in that the Bridgettine Nuns of Syon Abbey is the one community, out of vanished hundreds, that covered the fair hills of England, that has survived the devastations of the Reformation. For the last 500 years it has maintained its English integrity in spite of three centuries of its exile on the continent, being constantly and entirely recruited from subjects of the British crown. From the time of its founding—April 21, 1420—until today there runs a long story of glories, holiness, martyrdoms, deprivations and exiles, their heroic faith and hope enduring and triumphing to the end, preserving their national English Charters to the present day.

THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library.—C. LAMB.

The ill humor of Doctor Angelicus seemed all the more remarkable in his new spring clothing. It was a soft, warm morning in the Library, and Primus Criticus thought to cheer him up.

"A pretty garment, Angelicus. I always like these navy blues!"

"My choice is cool greys, for warm weather. They could not fit me with their 42 Stout, so I was obliged to sink back into the cheviot blues. There is no consideration in our business places for the exceptional man. Try to buy a smart collar, size 17, and you will see what I mean."

"Uniformity, Doctor—you sin against the first municipal virtue," declared Hereticus looking up from a pile of service publications. "The male and female figure must be long and straight, so that the machines may cut the cloth simply: rotundities are artistic—the beauty that lies in curves must be laundered out, if your clothes are to be found ready made: necklines and waist-measurements must keep within certain limitations: straw hats will not allow for unusual frontal developments, nor patent leather shoes welcome the six-toed geniuses of our newer generations."

"Dr. Draper of the Presbyterian Hospital has made some fantastic assertions," protested the Doctor. "He states that 'fat men with big soft hands are usually waggish and witty.' He seems to forget the after-dinner melancholy of great ones like Samuel Johnson, Gibbons the historian, Madame Blavatsky and Celia Thaxter. He does not convince me when he says, 'in a general way the group with the longer ears is composed of pernicious anaemia and gall-bladder people, and the other with shorter ears are candidates for ulcer, tuberculosis and nephritis.'"

"Our medical fraternities have their mystics also," interrupted Hereticus.

"Our greatest mystics today are the scientists, it seems. Literature with Hergesheimer, Irving Cobb, and Chesterton is falling into fat laps—while our humor and wit is apportioned to the lean and stringy producers. Nothing is as they used to say it was!"

* * *

As the Doctor paused Miss Anonymuncule was heard to murmur—

"What wisdom! What erudition!"

Encouraged by her words, the Doctor lapsed into one of his soliloquies.

"There is very little comfort for us stout folk, even in religion. This cultivation of the pointed arch seems distinctly Protestant, beside the round romanesques of the Universal Church! These lean saints, with perpendicular wrinkles are also disheartening to some pious souls. Give me the good old Flemish School with its plump angels—its solid Madonnas, and substantial bishops and patrons! They do not fit so well within the narrow panelings, as the pre-Raphaelite painters were to discover; but they are human—truly humanistic. Witness Zurbaran's triumph of Saint Thomas in which a large squad

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of husky angels is seen lifting the angelical philosopher into the clouds; look at the muscular wings of El Greco's angels. This association of sanctity with leanness, has a touch of northern heresy about it. We are disrespectful to our stouter saints. I am sure a closer study of the Apostolic age would reveal some startling facts to our aesthetic heretics of today. The Jews and the easterners generally have always had little respect for the flat-chested and thin-shanked creatures that are the mode of our modern dressmakers and artists. I feel sure that many a stout disciple has been relegated to the background because of his physical lines. And all this in the face of our fine portly Popes, prelates, and saints! Take the saint of Avilla, for instance. I am sure Teresa was a stout, hearty little woman."

"Oh, Doctor!" was heard from behind Miss Anonymuncule's pile of manuscripts.

✻ ✻ ✻

"Saint Birgitta was undoubtedly a plump figure of a woman, if we are to believe the sculptors of older days. Because Henry VIII was stout, does not make all fat men villains." The Doctor was waxing warmer, and Primus Criticus threw open the window.

"There was also the ascetical mystic, Saint John of the Cross, who—"

The Editor entered at this moment, exclaiming—

"Doctor, you know I question your history on that point. It seems subjective, rather objective—a personal interpretation."

Angelicus snorted once or twice—and then took out his manuscript folders in silence.

—THE LIBRARIAN.

The author of the paper on Saint Peter's of Barclay Street regrets the inadvertence which caused him to deprive his own parish Church of Saint Paul's in Brooklyn for the honor of enshrining the remains of the old-time benefactor, Cornelius Heeny. There was also a confusion of Mozart's Marriage of Figaro and Rossini's Barber of Seville—it was the latter opera that was first sung in America by Madame Malibran;—and the reverend founder of the order of the Sisters of Charity, Elizabeth Ann Seton, made her profession of faith to Reverend Matthew (not William) O'Brien.

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